The Uighur Empire

According to the T'ang Dynastic Histories

A STUDY IN SINO-UIGHUR RELATIONS 744–840

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Abbreviations

CCSLCT	*Chih-chai shu-lu chieh-t'i*
CCTSC	*Chün-chai tu-shu chih*
CTS	*Chiu T'ang-shu*
CTSCKC	*Chiu T'ang-shu chiao-k'an chi*
CTW	*Ch'üan T'ang-wen*
CWTM	*Ch'ung-wen tsung-mu*
FYCC	*Fen-yang chia-chuan*
HTS	*Hsin T'ang-shu*
LHKLSC	*Li hsiang-kuo lun-shih chi*
PIT	*Pien-i tien*
SPPY	Ssu-pu pei-yao
TCTC	*Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*
TCTCKI	*Tzu-chih t'ung-chien k'ao-i*
TCTCYC	*Tzu-chih t'ung-chien yin-chu*
✓ *TFYK*	*Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei*
THY	*T'ang hui-yao*
TKPS	*Fen-men chi-chu Tu kung-pu shih*
TT	*T'ung-tien*
TTCLC	*T'ang ta chao-ling chi*
TTSL	*Tai-tsung shih-lu*
WHTK	*Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao*
YH	*Yü-hai*
YHCC	*Yeh-hou chia-chuan*
YHCHTC	*Yüan-ho chün-hsien t'u-chih*

Introduction

One of the most important themes in Chinese foreign policy throughout the ages has been China's attempt to weaken the threat of the warlike peoples of Central and Northern Asia and, where possible, to turn their vast power to her own advantage. In these aims the Chinese have in most periods achieved a considerable degree of success. The emperors of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. to 220 A.D.) were able by war and diplomacy to stave off the incursions of the Hsiung-nu; those of the Sui (581–618) and early period of the succeeding T'ang (618-907) dealt similarly with the threat of the T'u-chüeh. In the years leading up to the great rebellion of An Lu-shan, which came close to overthrowing the T'ang, another people assumed enormous power in the Mongolian steppes. This was the Uighurs, and the T'ang court's success in persuading them to use their power to support it against An Lu-shan and his followers was one of the main reasons why the dynasty was able to survive the rebellion. It is their vital impact on the course of T'ang history that makes the Uighurs so interesting to the Sinologist.

The Uighurs were the leading tribe in a confederation of nine Turkic Tieh-le peoples,[1] and their name came to be used for the whole confederacy. During the period of their great power they inhabited Mongolia with their focal point in Karabalghasun on the Upper Orkhon River. Under the skilled leadership of ambitious rulers they were able to take advantage of divisions among the other powerful peoples of Central Asia and achieve a position of extreme importance in that area. The empire they founded lasted from 744 until 840, in which year they were expelled from their capital and split into various groups.

THE SOURCES

It is precisely because the Uighurs played so significant a role in the history

[1] The composition of the Uighurs is discussed by Pulleyblank in 'Some Remarks on the Toquzoghuz Problem', pp.35–42 and Haneda Tōru, 'Kyūsei Kaikotsu to Toquz OYuz to no kankei o ronzu', pp.325–94. Both articles quote further bibliographical materials. The main tribe of the nine, the Uighurs, was itself divided into ten sub-tribes of which the Yao-lo-ko was the chief. Until 795, the Uighur rulers were drawn from this sub-tribe. There were other groups under Uighur rule apart from the nine T'ieh-le tribes – for example, the Basmil and Kharlukh were conquered by the Uighurs and became absorbed into the confederation.

of the T'ang empire that the Chinese historians dealing with the period devote so much space to them.

The standard histories of the T'ang, the *Chiu T'ang-shu* (*Old T'ang History*)[2] and the *Hsin T'ang-shu* (*New T'ang History*),[3] contain extended sections on the Uighurs. *Chüan* 195 of *Chiu T'ang-shu* is a chronological description of the political history of the Uighurs during the T'ang. *Chüan* 217 of *Hsin T'ang-shu* is divided into two parts: the first gives Uighur political history up to 814 and the second completes their history for the T'ang period. It then goes on to add notes on some of the tribes which made up the Uighur empire, on other tribes related to the Uighurs and on the Kirghiz, the people who drove the Uighurs from Karabalghasun in 840. These two chapters provide us with the main connected accounts in Chinese literature of the Uighurs during the T'ang.

It is not my purpose here to describe or analyse these two works in detail.[4] However, a few comments on their chapters on the Uighurs may be of some value. I leave aside the question of the Confucian moral value of each work, even though this was the main respect in which the compilers of the new hoped to improve on the *Old T'ang History*,[5] since this seems to me of limited relevance to the modern historian.

One of the most important differences between the two accounts is that the *Old T'ang History* is much more precisely dated. It frequently gives dates to the month or day, while the *New T'ang History* rarely specifies more than the year. From this point of view the *Old T'ang History* is much more useful.

In most places the *New History* has recorded events somewhat more briefly than its predecessor. This seems to have been a deliberate policy of the compilers in all parts of their work.[6] On the other hand, there is a considerable amount of material in the *New History* which is not found at all in the old. Even so, the section of the *Chiu T'ang-shu* on the Uighur empire is slightly longer than that in the *Hsin T'ang-shu*.

Although the compilers of the *New History* have clearly relied heavily on the old for their information on the Uighurs, they had at their disposal

[2] *CTS* is traditionally ascribed to Liu Hsü. However, in actual fact, he was merely the chief minister who presented the work to the throne. The man whose labour contributed most to *CTS* was Chao Ying. See *Chiu Wu-tai shih* 89.10a; Chin Yü-fu, *Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh shih*, pp.103–4; Levy, *Biography of An Lu-shan*, p. 21.

[3] Like *CTS*, *HTS* was compiled by numerous scholars. They are tabulated in *Nien-erh shih k'ao-i* 56.959–68. The greatest contribution appears to have been made by Sung Ch'i.

[4] See in particular des Rotours, *Le traité des examens*, pp.56–71.

[5] Ibid., p.57.

[6] *HTS*, preface, p. 1b.

a number of works which were not available to the editors of the earlier work. The latter wrote in a difficult and unsettled period and, as a whole, their history is based to a very great extent on the original *T'ang-shu*, completed about 759, and the *shih-lu* or *Veritable Records*,[7] each of which was an official account of part or all of an emperor's reign. I think it likely that the section of the *Old History* dealing with the Uighurs of the empire period is drawn almost entirely from four works: the *Su-tsung shih-lu*, *Tai-tsung shih-lu*, *Te-tsung shih-lu*, and *Mu-tsung shih-lu*, that is the *Veritable Records of Emperor Su-tsung* (756–62), *Tai-tsung* (762–79), *Te-tsung* (779–805), and *Mu-tsung* (820–4). It is striking that, although the years 756–95 and 821–2 together account for less than half the century or so of the Uighur empire, about 95 per cent of the *Old T'ang History* text I have translated is devoted to those two periods.

Several other sources used for the *New T'ang History* Uighur biography can be specified. One is the *Yeh-hou chia-chuan*, an account of the life of the chief minister Li Pi (722–89) by his son Li Fan. It is unfortunately a very unreliable work (n.159)[8], but this has not prevented the editors of the *Hsin T'ang-shu* from giving several passages based on it, including a very long conversation between Te-tsung and Li Pi. Another is the *Li hsiang-kuo lun-shih chi*, a collection of treatises of Li Chiang (n.245), from which the compilers of the *New T'ang History* have extracted an entire memorial for their chapter on the Uighurs (n.246).

Despite the use made of such works, it seems to have been through the *Veritable Records* that most of the available information on the Uighurs was preserved. It is therefore relevant to push our inquiry back further and consider the sources of information used by the compilers of the *shih-lu*.

The task of preserving court records fell to the *Shih-kuan*, or Office of Historiographers. The various departments, courts, and ministries sent in frequent reports to this office on matters of concern to them. For the purposes of the chapters on the Uighurs, the two most important examples were the Court of Diplomatic Reception and the Ministry of War. 'Whenever an embassy arrived, the Court of Diplomatic Reception would make an official inquiry into the geography, customs, clothes and products brought as tribute [of the country whence the mission came], how far

[7] See *Nien-erh shih cha-chi* 16.4a–10b; Chin Yü-fu, *Shih-hsüeh shih*, pp.102–3; Pulleyblank, 'The *Tzyjyh Tongjiann Kaoyih* and the Sources for the History of the Period 730–763', pp.462–72.

[8] References in parentheses thus are to notes to the translations. Where no source is given for a statement, it is usually the basic texts translated here. The dates given there will enable the reader to find the relevant place.

away it was and the name of its ruler.' Foreign names and titles were transcribed into Chinese characters in an appropriate way, and it is frequently only in this form that they have survived. The Ministry of War recorded 'the day armies returned; the generals made a report on the cities and fortresses which had fallen [to the emperor], the officers wounded or killed and the live-stock and goods captured'.[9] In addition, provincial officials were required to send in reports of local events to the Office of Historiographers. All these records were preserved for the specific purpose of incorporation into the *shih-lu*.[10] At the end of each reign, officials of the office would compile an account of the preceding emperor's rule.[11]

When the compilers of the *Old T'ang History* came to write a chapter on the Uighurs, they simply looked through the *shih-lu* and selected references to the Uighurs, which they wrote down with little or no change. They were not always concerned to connect the accounts properly, and their chapter hence lacked coherence. The men who compiled the *New History* may have used more sources and placed more emphasis on the literary and moral value of their work, but the indirect or direct influence of the *shih-lu* remained strong and the same scissors-and-paste method of compilation is still in evidence.

There are other works besides the standard histories which give a connected account of the Uighurs. In *chüan* 98 the *T'ang hui-yao*[12] has a section which relates a few events in their history during the T'ang. There is a similar section in *chüan* 967 of the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei*.[13] Nevertheless, apart from the chapters in the standard T'ang histories, by far the most important sources for Uighur history in Chinese literature come from isolated references in certain works, and although these notices are usually parallel to passages in *Chiu T'ang-shu* 195 or *Hsin T'ang-shu* 217, they help to clarify these texts and to complete their accounts. The *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei*, which divides history into topics, notes in the section on embassies a number of missions from the Uighurs to the Chinese court not elsewhere mentioned; so too does the section on mutual trade. The basic annals of the two T'ang histories, especially the *Old History*, sometimes complement the records of the Uighur chapters. It may be added, too, that in all these cases the influence of the *shih-lu* is still clear.

[9] *THY* 63.1089. Cf. des Rotours, *Traité des fonctionnaires et traité de l'armée*, p.199 and Solomon, *The Veritable Record of the T'ang Emperor Shun-tsung*, pp.xxiii-vi.
[10] *T'ang liu-tien* 9.10a.
[11] See Chin Yü-fu, *Shih-hsüeh shih*, p.100. It should be added that no *shih-lu* were compiled for the last five T'ang emperors until the Sung (ibid., p.96).
[12] This work is discussed by des Rotours in *Traité des examens*, pp.92–3.
[13] Ibid., pp.91–2.

In this respect, I have found the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* particularly useful. It has quoted extensively from the *Veritable Records*,[14] and in some instances its record appears to be closer to the original than the parallel passage in *Chiu T'ang-shu* 195.

The greatest of all Chinese historical works, the *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien*[15] written in the eleventh century by Ssu-ma Kuang, contains copious isolated references to Uighur history, and because its dating is so precise, its style so coherent and clear, and its descriptions of events so detailed, it helps in innumerable places to clear up obscurities in the basic texts, and to date and complete the accounts contained in these works. Ssu-ma Kuang wrote a complementary work, the *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien k'ao-i*, in which he discusses discrepancies in the sources used for his great history. His notes are quite invaluable since they enable us to trace the sources of many of the statements made in his history and in other works where parallel passages indicate the same authority.[16] It is thus possible to judge the reliability of much of our material. The *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* was annotated by Hu San-hsing in the thirteenth century. His notes give information on various items, such as the customs of tribes, and they are particularly useful for their geographical notices.

A general point of the utmost importance concerning these and almost all other Chinese historical works is that they are completely centred on China. Their compilers were interested in the Uighurs mainly insofar as these affected China's development. For this reason they made little attempt to give due weight to what was important to the Uighurs, but recounted at length Uighur activities in China. For instance, among the most important events in the history of the Uighurs was their conversion to Manicheism, yet this is not even mentioned in the Chinese sources. On the other hand, the Uighur role in the defeat of An Ch'ing-hsü in 757, which was of peripheral importance for the Uighurs, is treated in great detail. It is not surprising that the Chinese sources should be deficient in this way, since Chinese Confucian historiography was aimed at the moral edification of future *Chinese* administrators and therefore regarded foreigners as a mere sideline. Yet there are many compensations for these drawbacks, and the relative lack of any other sources makes them the basis of our knowledge of the Uighurs.

[14] See Chin Yü-fu, *Shih-hsüeh shih*, p.100.
[15] Several important studies have been made on this work. See especially des Rotours, *Traité des examens*, pp.74–81 and Pulleyblank, 'Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssu-ma Kuang', pp.151–9.
[16] On the uses of the *TCTCKI* see especially Pulleyblank, 'Sources for the History', pp.448–73.

Among non-Chinese sources, only Uighur and Arab material have much of importance to add. Two Uighur stele inscriptions deserve special mention. One was discovered at Shine-usu in Northern Mongolia in 1909.[17] It is covered with runic Turkish characters which describe in the first person the exploits and wars of the second khaghan of the Uighur empire, Mo-yen-ch'o. Although badly worn, it yields information not otherwise available to the historian. The second was found east of the main street of the ancient Uighur capital, Karabalghasun, which had long lain in ruins. It was discovered by a Russian mission in 1889, and further fragments uncovered in 1890 and 1891. There are three parts of the inscription, one in Chinese, one in Sogdian, the other in Old Turkish.[18] Of the three, the Chinese is by far the best preserved. Rubbings of it were given to the members of the Tsung-li yamen to decipher and the results of their work later published in Vasil'ev's *Kitaiskiia nadpisi na Orkhonskikh pamiatnikakh v Komo-Tsaidame i Karabalgasune*. The Chinese version has also been translated several times into European languages. The inscription appears to have been written in the early decades of the ninth century and is of the utmost historical significance for two major reasons: it is the only early source to describe the introduction of Manicheism among the Uighurs and also the only one to detail the extraordinary restoration of the Uighurs under the founder of the second dynasty of their empire.

These steles do not exhaust the Uighur sources, for among the amazing wealth of material found in the Turfan oasis, most of which deals with later periods, there are a few documents which have something to add about the Uighur empire. They are of particular interest for the religious, social, and linguistic development of the Uighurs and, as such, of only marginal concern for the present study. However, I have found them useful complements to the Chinese records.

The Uighur sources tend to be rhetorical, and are therefore prone to exaggeration. Further, most of them were not intended as primarily historical reports and their precision of detail is suspect. In the case of the gravestones, for instance, 'the purpose of their composition is the glorification of a deceased hero', as a result of which 'numerous passages can be found that recall his noble deeds after a fashion which is epic rather

[17] Ramstedt, 'Zwei uigurische runeninschriften in der Nord-Mongolei', p.10.

[18] See Hansen, 'Zur soghdischen Inschrift auf dem dreisprachigen Denkmal von Karabalgasun', pp.5–6. Hansen has translated what remains of the Sogdian version on pp.14–23. For comments on and a translation of the remnants of the Old Turkish inscription see Radloff, *Die alttürkischen Inschriften der Mongolei*, pp.291–4.

than historical'.[19] On the other hand, the authors of the steles certainly paid close attention to veracity and the accounts they wrote can normally be accepted as factual.[20] There are also two respects in which the Uighur sources in general are preferable to the Chinese. Firstly, most are much nearer in time and place to any events which they describe. The Uighur who is entitled *I-nan-chu* in the Chinese transcription, and who helped write the Chinese text of the Karabalghasun Inscription, could well have actually witnessed the events he notes, or at least have heard about them from those who had done so. Secondly, the texts were written with a more sympathetic approach and were far more likely to record matters important to the Uighurs rather than those of significance to the alien Chinese.

Like the authors of the Turfan documents, the Arab historians report much more about the later Uighurs than those of the empire period. This is not surprising since the vast majority of the Uighurs lived much closer to Arab territory after the fall of Karabalghasun than their forefathers had done. The origin of almost all knowledge of the Uighurs from 744 to 840 in Moslem countries was a certain Tamīm ibn Baḥr whose works have not survived. However, much of what he wrote has been preserved through quotations and references in other Moslem histories and geographies.[21] Tamīm ibn Baḥr actually visited Karabalghasun and travelled through Uighur territory. His information is thus first-hand, and even if he failed to understand all he saw, some information can be gleaned from what has survived of his comments, particularly those relating to the social history of the Uighur empire.

THE HISTORY OF THE UIGHUR EMPIRE

Although it is with Sino-Uighur relations that the Chinese sources – and the present work – are primarily concerned, it is necessary to fill in some background information with a brief survey of the main events and trends within the Uighur empire itself.[22]

[19] Bazin, 'Man and the Concept of History in Turkish Central Asia during the Eighth Century', pp.95–6.

[20] Ibid., pp.88–91.

[21] See especially Minorsky, 'Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey to the Uyghurs', pp.276–7.

[22] Among the best Western-language treatments of early Uighur history may be cited Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources*, vol. I, pp. 236ff; Grousset *L'empire des steppes*, pp.172ff; Hamilton, *Les Ouïghours à l'époque des Cinq Dynasties*, pp.1ff; and Tikhonov, *Khoziaistvo i obshchestvennyi stroi Uigurskogo gosudarstva*, pp.22ff. Of particular interest from an antiquarian point of view is the pioneering work of Deguignes, *Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols, et des autres tartares occidentaux*, 1756. There is a treatment of the Uighur Empire, based on Chinese sources, in vol. II, pp. 11–25, and it is still useful more than two centuries after its composition.

For some 150 years, from about 400 A.D., the entire Central Asian region from northern Korea to Karashar was dominated by the Juan-juan, and the ancestors of the Uighurs, the Kao-ch'e, lived under their control as subjects. In the middle of the sixth century, the Juan-juan were conquered by the T'u-chüeh, who used the T'ieh-le tribes to govern the wild regions of the north. In 582, the T'u-chüeh split into two political groups, the Eastern and Western, and the latter attempted to keep the T'ieh-le under their domination. However, early in the seventh century these managed to gain their independence and over the following 100 years or so assisted the Chinese in successful campaigns against several peoples, including both the Eastern and Western T'u-chüeh. In 647, the various T'ieh-le tribes were placed under Chinese protection. It is worth emphasising here that the Uighurs already had a tradition of alliance with China even before the establishment of their empire. This may have exercised some influence over their behaviour when they eventually became masters of the steppes, especially since the T'u-chüeh whom they replaced had so often been the target of their alliance with the T'ang.

Towards the end of the century the Uighurs again came under T'u-chüeh domination, and remained in this situation until the end of the reign of the famous Eastern T'u-chüeh khaghan Mo-ch'o (691–716). At that time they turned actively against their masters and were instrumental in bringing about the khaghan's death and the consequent weakening of his empire.[23] From that time on they appear to have been independent and, according to the *Old T'ang History*, 'they gradually became powerful'.[24] In fact, under Ku-li *p'ei-lo*[25] the Uighurs were able, with assistance from the Basmil and Kharlukh, to overthrow the Eastern T'u-chüeh empire. However, the coalition which had accomplished this feat proved to be only temporary. No sooner had the T'u-chüeh been defeated than the Kharlukh and Uighurs turned against the Basmil and subjected them. It was then the turn of the Kharlukh to be the victims, and an easterly group was brought under the control of the Uighurs. This was shortly after Ku-li *p'ei-lo* had signalled the establishment of his empire in 744.

If Ku-li *p'ei-lo* was the actual founder of this Uighur state, it was left to his son Mo-yen-ch'o (747–59) to consolidate it. According to the Shine-usu Inscription, he strengthened the hold of the Uighurs over the

[23] See Pulleyblank, 'Some Remarks', pp.36–8.

[24] *CTS* 195.2b, translated Pulleyblank, 'Some Remarks', p.39 and Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux*, p. 93.

[25] For this and other titles of Turkish origin (italicised) see the lists of Uighur khaghans and Uighur titles appended.

recalcitrant Basmil and Kharlukh; and it was also he who built the Uighur capital city and imperial palace.[26]

Mo-yen-ch'o was succeeded in 759 by his second son Mou-yü Khaghan, under whom the Uighurs appear to have reached the apex of their power. From the point of view of his own people, the most important event of his reign was the introduction of Manicheism. In 762–3 Mou-yü met some followers of this religion in Lo-yang while he was there assisting the Chinese against the An Lu-shan rebellion. He became a convert and shortly after imposed his new faith on his own people. An Old Turkish text claims that the decision to take this step was greeted with joy by the Uighur populace.[27] Nevertheless, he had encountered strong opposition from conservative elements in his own court (n.146) and considered it necessary to issue a law whereby groups of ten people should be set up, in each of which one man was responsible for the spiritual welfare of the other nine; it was the duty of each group leader to maintain enthusiasm for the religion among those under his charge and give 'good instruction' to anyone who fell into sin.[28]

Manicheism was founded by the Persian Mani (216–76).[29] It was a missionary faith and its adherents succeeded in spreading it to a great many parts of the Eurasian continent. Mani believed in two opposing principles, good or light, and evil or darkness, the second of which was assisted by the material world and especially the human body. He taught that time should be viewed in three phases, in the first of which good and evil were separated, in the second mingled, and in the third again distinct. Man existed as body and spirit only in the middle phase and it was his duty to abstract himself from all matter. This would help bring on a great cleansing process, which Mani believed would usher in the third phase. When that time arrived, those who had succeeded in freeing themselves from the material world would live in the region of light, those who had failed in that of darkness.[30] Mani's religion was led by a stratified clergy, termed 'the elect', of whom celibacy and fasting were required. The laymen, or auditors, were allowed to marry and eat normally, but

[26] Ramstedt, 'Zwei uigurische runeninschriften', pp.26–30.

[27] Bang and von Gabain, 'Türkische Turfan-Texte II', p.417.

[28] Ibid., p.419.

[29] See the chronological table of Mani's life in Klíma, *Manis Zeit und Leben*, pp.523–7. His biography is discussed in detail pp.217–400.

[30] A concise and up-to-date treatment of Mani's doctrines can be found in Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism*, pp.43–73. A bibliography on the subject is given pp.148–50. Klíma has set Mani's teachings within the general framework of other doctrinal systems of his time in *Manis Zeit*, pp.203–16.

were expected to be fairly abstemious and generous in giving alms.[31]

Manicheism had become regarded as a characteristically Sogdian religion and one of the main results of Mou-yü's adoption of the faith was a dramatic increase in the influence of the Sogdians at his court. Moreover, although there had been a Sogdian population in the empire before his time (n.145), their number rose significantly when he was converted to their religion. It has been suggested that a number of them were brought from Ferghana as slaves, but their importance to the Uighurs lay primarily in the impact of their culture and in their ability as architects and builders: Sogdian characteristics are present in the ruins of many buildings discovered in Uighur territory.[32] The Sogdians came to form a kind of state within the Uighur state; and their supremacy in several professional groups enabled them to wield enormous power within the empire.

In the event it was his dependence on the Sogdians which led to Mou-yü's downfall. In 779 they advised him to take advantage of the state mourning which followed the death in June that year of the Chinese Emperor Tai-tsung and undertake an invasion of China. Mou-yü agreed to do this. His chief minister and first cousin Tun *mo-ho* was opposed to the plan; and when he saw the tide against him, murdered Mou-yü, together with many of his Sogdian supporters and advisers, and set himself on the throne. A period of anti-Sogdian rule began; it is probable that Tun also favoured a rejection of Manicheism and a return to the natural cults of the Turkic peoples (n.146).

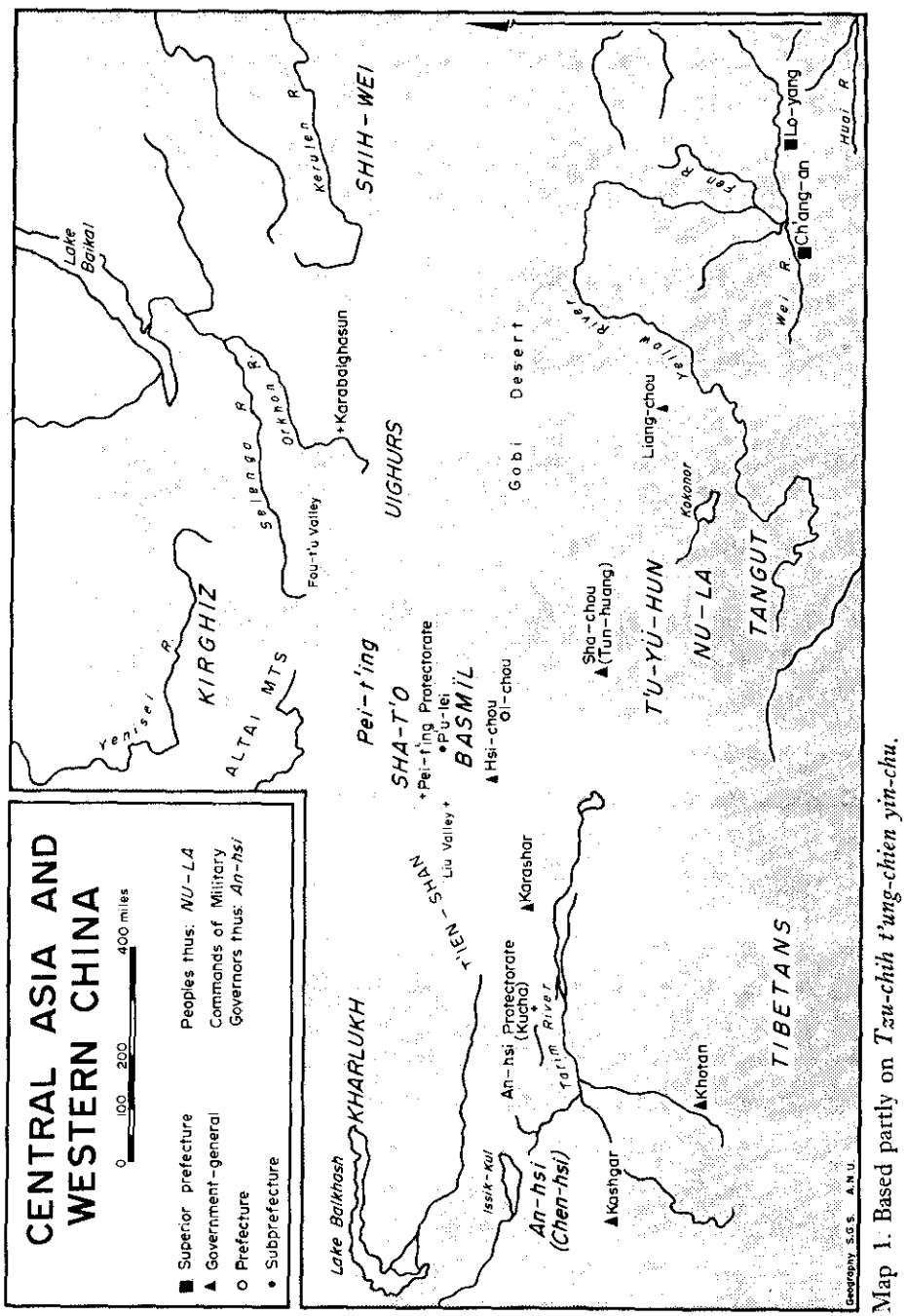
After Tun *mo-ho*'s death in 789, and especially after that of his successor To-lo-ssu the following year, Uighur power and prestige declined. At the court, the authority of the ruling Yao-lo-ko clan fell into the hands of the chief minister, General *Hsieh yü-chia-ssu*, while in the west, the same general suffered acute humiliation in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the fall of the Chinese and Uighur outpost Pei-t'ing. The conquerors of the region were the Tibetans, whose power in the area had greatly expanded and who had for some time been making territorial gains at China's expense.

In 795, rule of the Uighur empire passed to the Hsieh-tieh tribe. The new khaghan was called *Ku-tu-lu* and had been influential since the time of Tun *mo-ho*. In fact, he was probably the same man as the *Hsieh yü-chia-ssu* who had so recently failed to preserve Pei-t'ing.[33] It was under this

31 See Widengren, *Mani*, pp.95–106, 153–4.

32 Kyzlasov, *Istoriia Tuvy v srednie veka*, pp.76–7.

33 See Abe Takeo, *Nishi-Uiguru kokushi no kenkyū*, pp.191–2 and Yamada Nobuo, 'Kyūsei Kaikotsu kahan no keifu', p.94.



Map 1. Based partly on *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien yin-chu*.

man, known to the Chinese as '*Huai-hsin*',[34] that the Uighur empire witnessed an extraordinary restoration. '*Huai-hsin*' succeeded in consolidating the power of his own clan at court. Pei-t'ing was retaken from the Tibetans and the empire extended as far west as Ferghana. The influence of the Sogdians and Manicheans had recovered even before '*Huai-hsin*' actually ascended the throne and seems to have been stronger than ever under his rule (n.232).

The founder of the new dynasty died in 808 and was succeeded by '*Pao-i*' Khaghan. His was also a prosperous reign and strong Uighur influence was retained in the west. This is evident from a Manichean hymn-book, completed under '*Pao-i*' or possibly even later (n.232), where it is made clear that cities like Pei-t'ing, Hsi-chou (Kocho), Kucha, and Karashar were dependencies of the Uighurs.[35] Nevertheless, '*Pao-i*' also appears to have presided over some degree of decline in Uighur power, and towards the end of his life the Tibetans became more confident that they could overturn the empire and take its capital if they so desired (n.250). The Manichean clergy remained extremely influential and, despite the strong emphasis of their religion on self-denial, the court grew increasingly addicted to luxurious living.

With '*Pao-i*' Khaghan's death in 821 the forces of disintegration in the Uighur empire gathered momentum. Abroad, war broke out with the Kirghiz, powerful neighbours to the north, while at home, court intrigue wasted the power of the royal family, rebellion became a serious problem and, to add to everything, a bad season and severe winter in 839 killed much of the livestock upon which the Uighur economy was so dependent. In 840, the Kirghiz, invited by a rebel chief, attacked the tottering empire, killed the khaghan and took the capital.

An interesting and important history lay ahead of the Uighurs, especially in the cultural field, and a people of that name is still to be found in Sinkiang. But in fact their period of real power ended in the ninth century and, as the editor of the *New T'ang History* jubilantly remarks, 'their state in the long run did not rise again.'[36]

The empire period was an important phase in the development of the Uighurs not only politically but also culturally and socially. The roots of

[34] For this and other titles of Chinese origin (italicised and in inverted commas) see the list of Uighur khaghans appended.

[35] See Müller, 'Ein Doppelblatt aus einem manichäischen Hymnenbuch', pp.10–12, von Gabain, 'Steppe und Stadt im Leben der ältesten Türken', pp.60–1. The identification of the place-names in the hymn-book is discussed in Henning, 'Argi and the "Tokharians" ', pp.566–7.

[36] *HTS* 217B.4a, translated also by Hamilton in *Les Ouïghours*, p.17.

their later contributions in the fields of writing and art were planted through their adoption of Manicheism and absorption of Sogdian influence. In the social sphere, the empire period was of particular significance in that it witnessed a partial transfer from the totally nomadic existence of their ancestors to a more settled and sophisticated livelihood in which cities, commerce, and agriculture played an important role.[37]

Before 744, the Uighurs 'had no fixed dwellings, they roamed about in search of waters and pastures . . . . and they were excellent horseriders and archers'.[38] However, it was not long after the empire was established that Mo-yen-ch'o built a capital city. Moreover, it appears to have been an impressive one. Tamīm ibn Baḥr reports that it included a magnificent royal castle and 'twelve iron gates of huge size'.[39] Mo-yen-ch'o is also known to have built another city on the Selenga River (n.11).

Concurrently we find the growth of commerce. Tamīm describes Karabalghasun as 'populous and thickly crowded' with 'markets and various trades'.[40] Archaeologists have also uncovered signs that there were among the Uighurs groups such as metallurgists, potters, engravers, blacksmiths, sculptors, stone-masons, weavers, and jewellers. They also seem to have mined iron-ore, copper, gold, and silver.[41]

As the people settled down, increasing numbers of them took up agriculture. Once again Tamīm is our main source for this. He reports 'villages lying closely together and cultivated tracts' in the region near the capital, and Karabalghasun itself as a 'great town, rich in agriculture'.[42] Archaeologists have found evidence of irrigation and the use of millstones and pestles in Karabalghasun. They have even discovered signs that grain, such as millet, was buried with the corpses of some Uighurs.[43] Their excavations provide striking confirmation of Tamīm's claim.

Yet the process towards the settled life was a gradual one. Stock raising nomads remained extremely important in the Uighur economy and in the regions far from the capital and other great cities the old ways continued unchanged. The empire period saw the beginnings of the trend away

[37] See von Gabain, 'Steppe und Stadt', pp.42–50; Tikhonov, *Khoziaistvo*, pp.29–31; Kyzlasov, *Istoriia Tuvy*, p.85; and Feng Chia-sheng, and others, *Wei-wu-erh tsu shih-liao chien-pien*, vol. I, pp.28ff.

[38] *CTS* 195.1a, translated also by Chavannes, *Documents*, pp.87–8.

[39] Minorsky, 'Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey', p.283. Cf. also Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, p.268.

[40] Minorsky, 'Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey', p.283.

[41] Kyzlasov, *Istoriia Tuvy*, p.85.

[42] Minorsky, 'Tamīm ibn Baḥr's Journey', p.283.

[43] Tikhonov, *Khoziaistvo*, pp.29–30; Kyzlasov, *Istoriia Tuvy*, p.85.

from nomadism, but certainly left much room for its consolidation in later periods.[44]

SINO-UIGHUR RELATIONS

Let us now turn to the principal object of this study – the relations between the Chinese T'ang and Uighur empires and the impact of the Uighur presence upon the great civilisation to the south-east. I propose to deal with this subject under five headings: Uighur assistance to China in times of crisis; Uighur violence in or near China's main cities; Tun *mo-ho*'s reign; diplomatic relations and marriages; and commercial contacts. The history of these relations shows the Uighurs as the theoretical allies of the Chinese throughout almost all the period 744 to 840. However, it demonstrates also that under Mo-yen-ch'o, and even more so under Mou-yü, the Uighurs did not hesitate to exploit the Chinese dependence on them, but that under Tun *mo-ho* a much friendlier attitude towards China developed in Karabalghasun. During the first decade of the second dynasty, relations seem to have been almost completely severed. However, when they were resumed they were fairly friendly and, after a tense period under '*Pao-i*', became more so from about 820. The attitude of the Chinese to the Uighurs remained more or less constant throughout. They were prepared to use their north-western neighbours for their own purposes, when the occasion demanded, and to extend diplomatic friendship towards them, but essentially they feared and distrusted the Uighurs as foreign barbarians.

Uighur Assistance to China in Times of Crisis

The history of Uighur aid to the Chinese government, which was one of the most important aspects of the relations between the two states, began during the reign of the second khaghan of the empire, Mo-yen-ch'o, under whom the Uighurs were able to gain a very powerful position vis-à-vis the Chinese.

It so happened that, just when the Uighur state had become united and strong, the Chinese T'ang empire under Hsüan-tsung was undergoing a sharp decline. In 751 a Chinese army was utterly defeated by Arabs and their allies in the famous battle of the Talas River, which meant for China the loss of all her positions in Kashgaria. In the same year an ill-advised attempt to subdue the new and friendly Thai kingdom of Nan-chao

[44] See also Li Fu-t'ung, *Hui-hu shih*, pp.144–7. Li believes that the Uighurs had developed no agriculture during the empire period. He has worked exclusively from Chinese sources and appears to have overlooked the evidence cited above.

to the south-west of China ended in total failure, while in the north-east the Khitan were able to destroy a T'ang army under An Lu-shan. These catastrophes were the prelude to a much greater disaster, the rebellion of An Lu-shan (n.13), which meant for China, once so powerful and far-reaching an empire, the loss of almost all her foreign dominions and the decline of her central government, the authority of which was undermined by the intrigues of the eunuchs at court and by the armies of the military governors in the provinces.

An Lu-shan had for some years held high command in Ho-pei in the north-east of China, which was known for its separatist tendencies.[45] He governed with skill and took care to keep in the good graces of the great dictator Li Lin-fu (d.752).[46] In 751 he was called to court where he became intimate with the emperor and his favourite concubine, Yang Kuei-fei (d.756). In 754 the emperor wanted to confer a high title upon An Lu-shan, but the dictator Yang Kuo-chung (d.756),[47] who was second cousin to Yang Kuei-fei but was not so favourably disposed towards An as his predecessor Li Lin-fu had been, refused to agree to the emperor's wish, claiming that Lu-shan was trying to revolt. Hsüan-tsung would not believe this accustation and, in February 754, made Lu-shan the Left Vice President of the Department of Affairs of State, the main official arm of the empire's administration. Feeling insecure among the intrigues of his enemies at court, Lu-shan asked permission to return to the north and, this being granted, he left the capital Ch'ang-an in March 754, nursing a grudge against Yang Kuo-chung, but also conscious of the superiority of his own military strength.

In December 755 An Lu-shan began his revolt. The following month he took Lo-yang and set up his own dynasty, declaring himself the emperor. The rebel advance was halted for a while at the T'ung Pass, where the Yellow River joins the Wei, and the invasion of Ho-pei from Shansi by the great general Kuo Tzu-i (697–781, n.18) seemed to be making progress towards defeating the rebels, when in July 756 the collapse of the T'ung Pass left the way to Ch'ang-an unguarded. An Lu-shan advanced towards the capital, whereupon the emperor fled towards Szechwan, and a few days afterwards Lu-shan took Ch'ang-an. This was the last of his triumphs, and the dynamic force of his rebellion was undermined, for shortly after, on

[45] See Pulleyblank, *The Background of the Rebellion of An Lu-shan*, pp.75–81.

[46] Li Lin-fu's biographies can be found in *CTS* 106.1a–5a, *HTS* 223A.5b–9b. His career is outlined by des Rotours in *Traité des fonctionnaires*, pp.201–2, and his ministry analysed by Pulleyblank in *Background*, pp.82–103.

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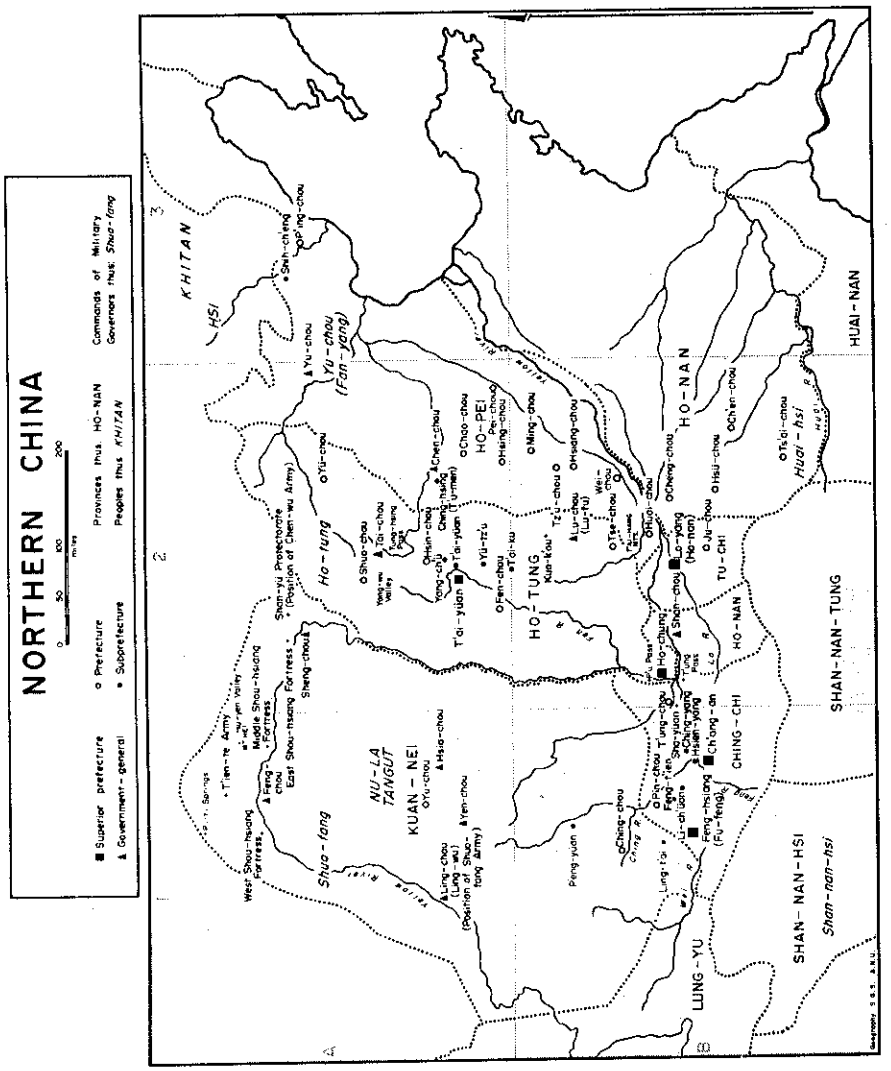


Map 2.
Provincial boundaries are those from 733 until the rise of the military governors following the An Lu-shan rebellion. Based partly on *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien yin-chu* and *T'ang ti-li chih-t'u*

29 January 757, he was assassinated by one of his subordinates, Yen Chuang, in collaboration with his own son, An Ch'ing-hsü (n.34), who immediately took control of the rebels.

Meanwhile, the government was organising resistance. On 12 August 756, Su-tsung ascended the throne at Ling-wu and his father, the disgraced and now feeble Emperor Hsüan-tsung, abdicated. As part of his plan to defeat the rebellion, Su-tsung sent embassies to various foreign peoples, including the Uighurs, asking for help. At the head of that to the Uighurs were Li Ch'eng-shen (n.14), a scion of the imperial family, and the famous Chinese general P'u-ku Huai-en, himself of T'ieh-le origin (n.16). The khaghan declared himself willing to render assistance and sealed his agreement by offering his sister-in-law, whom he adopted as his daughter, to Ch'eng-shen as a bride. The emperor made a point of receiving both her and the Uighur embassy which brought her with extreme courtesy.

Although there was nothing unusual about such behaviour, it is clear that the emperor was aware of his weak position and of the value Uighur military might could be to him. This is shown from another incident of a similar kind which took place at about the same time. A certain Uighur general, Ko-lo-chih (n.22), who had rendered China minor service against one of the rebels Yin Tzu-ch'i, had felt humiliated at his low rank in the emperor's court. When Su-tsung heard about this, he made a special point of honouring him with a personal audience.

The emperor's anxiety to woo the Uighurs was made all the more pressing by the fact that a group of one of the T'ieh-le tribes, the T'ung-lo, had earlier joined An Lu-shan's side. It is true that they defected from it, but did not join the government and so still formed a threat to Su-tsung. The great Chinese general Kuo Tzu-i, who was to play a vital part in the suppression of the An Lu-shan rebellion, formed a coalition with the Uighur khaghan Mo-yen-ch'o and defeated them near the north-eastern bend of the Yellow River on 7 December 756. However, although the incident was important in that it was the only occasion on which Mo-yen-ch'o himself took part in the fighting in China, it was an additional reminder to Su-tsung that he could not take Uighur support for granted. The khaghan had demanded that Kuo Tzu-i 'pay respect to his wolf pennons' before he would even discuss the campaign. Already it was obvious that the diplomatic concessions were all to be on China's side.

It was not until 11 July 757 that the first important contingents of Uighurs, headed by Grand General To-lan (n.23) arrived at court. The man who was to lead the Uighurs throughout the wars which regained Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang for the T'ang, the khaghan's eldest son *Yeh-hu*

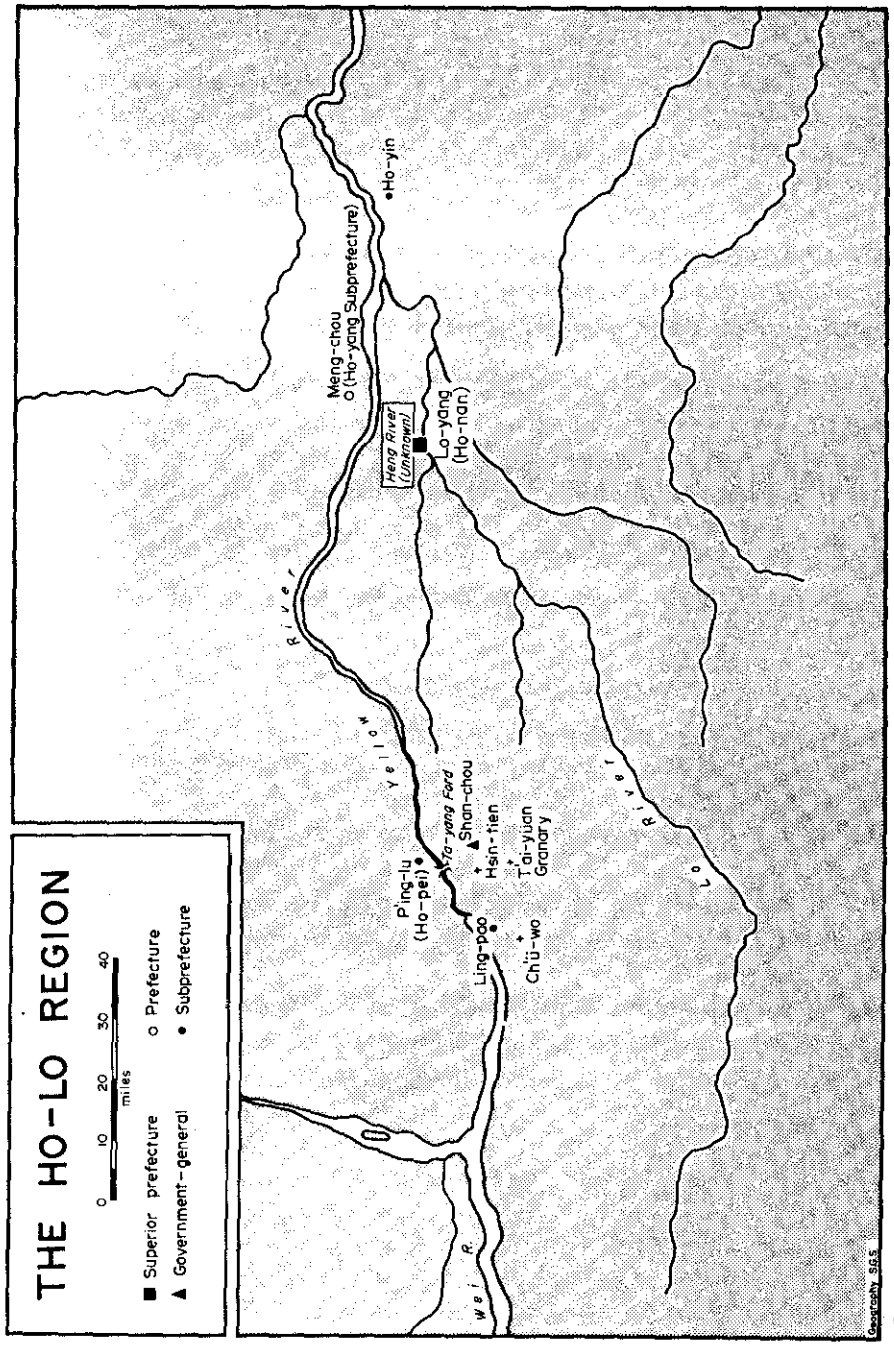
(n.24), arrived a little later with 4,000 cavalry. The small number of this force is interesting. The numbers involved in the battles to recapture the two capitals were enormous, yet with a force of only about 4,000 the Uighurs were able to play a decisive part in them. The emperor's eldest son, Li Shu, who was later to rule as the Emperor Tai-tsung, held a meeting with *Yeh-hu* and treated him with his usual courtesy. At the end of October, thirteen of the Uighur leaders, headed by *Yeh-hu*, came to Feng-hsiang (n.26), some distance west of their objective Ch'ang-an, and Kuo Tzu-i gave them an enormous banquet. It was only after these preliminary politenesses that the campaign actually got under way.

On 11 November 757, Li Shu took his forces to a point east of the Hsiang-chi Temple, which lay south of Ch'ang-an, and then went west towards the Feng River. Two days later, the T'ang forces prepared for battle, facing north from a position north of the Hsiang-chi Temple and south-west of Ch'ang-an. The rebels advanced from the city and the government forces were promptly thrown into confusion. The attempt to recapture Ch'ang-an seemed defeated, even though the commander of the forward guard Li Ssu-yeh (d.759) succeeded in maintaining the morale of his troops through his own personal courage (n.30). Though stripped to the waist he stood in front of his troops, shouting encouraging commands. All the soldiers were armed with long swords; they 'advanced like a wall and fearlessly struggled forward, scattering and destroying whatever came up against them'.[48]

Meanwhile some rebel soldiers had secretly gone to the east of the government forces and were trying to move south in order to strike at their rear. However, at the critical moment, P'u-ku Huai-en and a force of Uighurs attacked and defeated them before the ambush was launched, and then headed north towards the rebel rear. The anti-T'ang troops were wedged in between the Uighurs, led by Huai-en, and Ssu-yeh, still in command of the forward guard of the government army. This action was decisive and the rebels were defeated. The following day, 14 November, Ch'ang-an was reoccupied by the T'ang armies. Interestingly enough, Huai-en suggested to Li Shu after the battle that the fleeing rebels be pursued, but the heir-apparent turned down the proposal on the grounds that Huai-en was too tired and should first recover his strength and that of his followers.[49] Perhaps the next battles could have been prevented.

Before the Battle of Hsiang-chi, an agreement had been made between the Chinese and Uighurs that the latter would be given the right of plunder

[48] *TCTC* 220.7033.
[49] *TCTC* 220.7033–4.



Map 3. The course of the Heng River is unknown. Based partly on *T'ang ti-li chih-t'u*.

should the capital be retaken. *Yeh-hu* demanded the reward in accordance with the pact. Li Shu replied by saluting the Uighur leader, pointing out that the rebels were still in occupation of Lo-yang and asking that he should postpone his demand for reward until that city was retaken. *Yeh-hu* was taken by surprise, but we are told that he dismounted and responded to Shu's courtesy by kneeling in front of him and clasping his feet in agreement to Shu's proposal. Most people, notably the emperor, were much impressed by Shu's diplomatic treatment of the foreign prince.[50] This event long remained in the memory of the Chinese. It was considered by some a humiliation that their heir-apparent should salute a 'barbarian', but the incident was held up as an outstanding example of how a civilised people could impose its will on a foreigner through superior diplomacy.

The Uighurs left Ch'ang-an and marched towards the eastern capital Lo-yang, camping south of the Yellow River in Ch'ü-wo, which lay not far east of the great bend where the Wei joins the Yellow River. Meanwhile, the rebels under An Ch'ing-hsü, who was in Lo-yang, had gathered an enormous force to defend that city. A group of rebel ambushers had hidden in a neighbouring valley, so *Yeh-hu* sent out his general *Chü-pi-shih t'u-po p'ei-lo* and others, who exterminated the ambushers and then halted in the north of the adjoining mountain.

The rebel army had taken up a position near the foot of the same mountain and, on 30 November 757 (n.33), engaged in battle with Kuo Tzu-i. This was in Hsin-tien not far north-east of Ch'ü-wo. Naturally, the rebels were making good use of their position near the foot of the mountain and were gaining a distinct advantage over Kuo Tzu-i, whose army was spread out on the plain so that the rebels' advance was downhill. Suddenly the Uighur contingent under *Chü-pi-shih t'u-po p'ei-lo* saw what was happening from the mountain and descended, bearing down upon the enemy rear. The rebels were taken by surprise and the day was won for the government. Once again a small number of Uighurs had proved decisive in a battle involving huge numbers of men. The sources speak of 100,000 severed heads lying about the plain. There is no need to take this figure at its face value but the number of killed must nevertheless have been large. An Ch'ing-hsü was informed of what had happened and fled towards the north, setting up his capital in Hsiang-chou, Ho-pei Province. After the defeat most of the rebels surrendered, and An Ch'ing-hsü himself died in April 759 (n.34). However, the rebellion was not yet over, for its leadership passed to Shih Ssu-ming and his son Ch'ao-i, whose final defeat was still some years in the future.

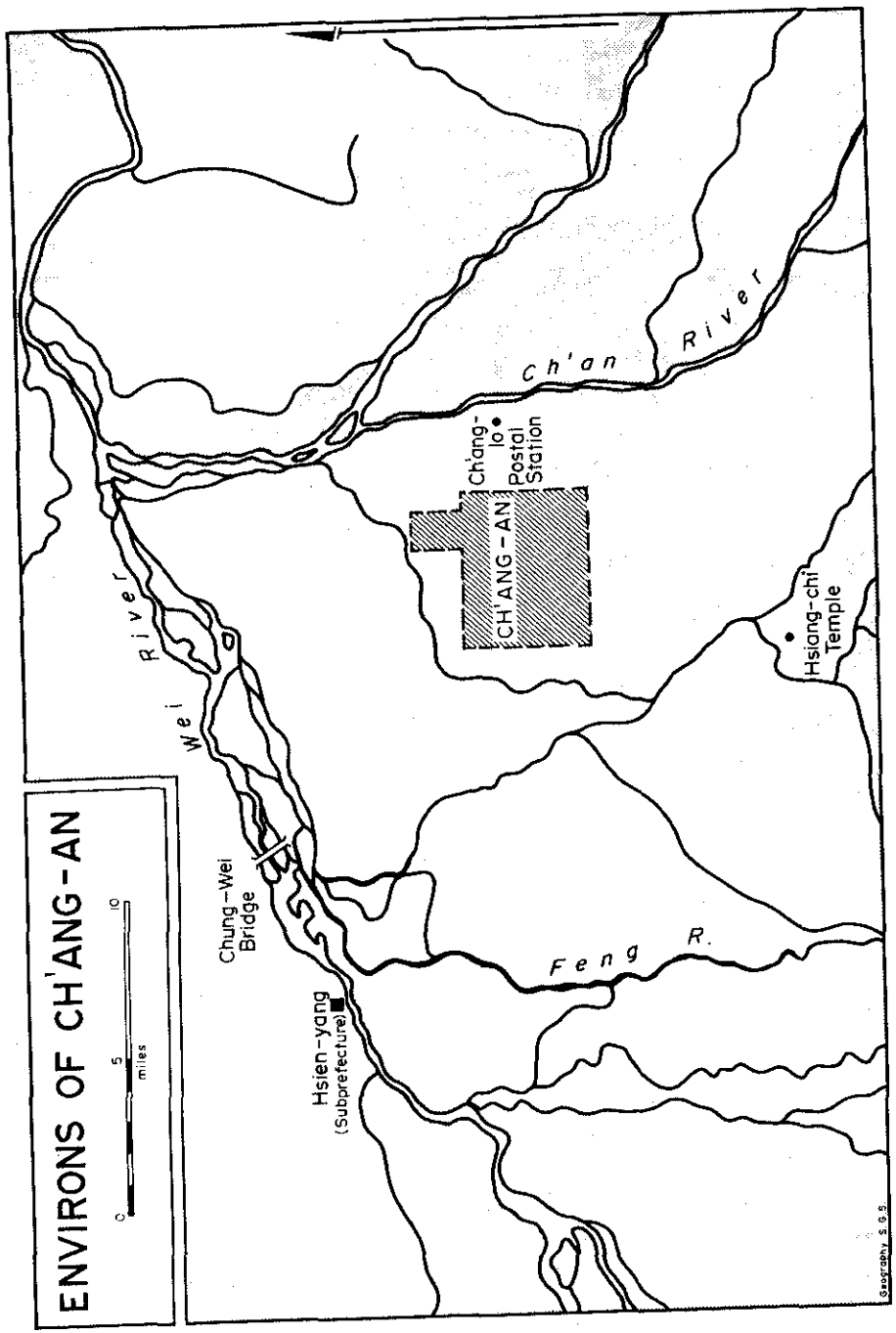
[50] *TCTC* 220.7034–5.

Early in December 757, the government forces entered Lo-yang (n.33). The Uighurs took advantage of the agreement made at Ch'ang-an and plundered the city for three days. On 8 December, the emperor returned to the capital and six days later *Yeh-hu* made a triumphal entry into Ch'ang-an. He was given a tremendous welcome and received in audience by the emperor in the Grand Audience Hall. On 30 December, Su-tsung issued a decree which praised in extravagant terms the *Yeh-hu* upon whose forces the defeat of the rebels had so largely depended, and gave him an extremely high rank in the Chinese state.

The first phase in the defeat of the rebels was thus over, and it is quite clear from the preceding that Uighur assistance had indeed been of great significance in the government victories. Already the Uighurs had made use of this fact in their pillage of Lo-yang, the excesses of which even Li Shu had been unable to prevent. This was but the beginning of Uighur insults to the Chinese, and they were inflicted with impunity because both sides realised how great the emperor's debt to his so-called allies had been. This was a humiliation which the T'ang court was to be forced to suffer for some years to come.

In 759 the Uighurs once again sent troops to help the T'ang against the continuing rebellion. In October the preceding year Su-tsung had set up the 'army of the nine military governors', which, he hoped, would be able to eject An Ch'ing-hsü from his seat in Hsiang-chou (n.65). The Uighurs, led by Prince Ku-ch'o, accompanied the chief of the nine governors, Kuo Tzu-i, to the rebel stronghold. On 7 April a major battle took place outside it between the T'ang forces and the rebels, who were led by Shih Ssu-ming (n.61). In the event, the Uighurs were not able to repeat their triumphs of 757. The leadership of the government armies lacked cohesion and on the day of the battle a fierce dust storm arose to the decisive advantage of the rebel defenders of Hsiang-chou. The attempt to dislodge An Ch'ing-hsü ended in total failure (n.66).

This episode showed the Chinese that the Uighurs were not invincible and they would doubtless have enjoyed gloating over the fact had not their own success been so bound up with that of the Uighurs. It did lead the poet Tu Fu to question the value of Uighur aid and the wisdom of making diplomatic concessions to China's northern neighbours (n.70), but in the long run it did nothing to strengthen the T'ang ability to defy the Uighurs. In fact under Mo-yen-ch'o's successor, Mou-yü, its dependence became even more humiliating, since Mou-yü was a crueller man than either his predecessor or *Yeh-hu* and exercised even less restraint in exploiting his position.



Early in June 760 Shih Ssu-ming succeeded in taking once again the eastern capital and second city of China, Lo-yang (n.84). In May 762 both Hsüan-tsung and his son Su-tsung died, so Shih Ch'ao-i, who had been in command of the rebellion since April 761 (n.61), seized the opportunity of the double mourning at court to try and solicit the support of the Uighurs. Certainly there was no need for him to manufacture lies in explaining the exhaustion of the imperial government. Local military governors ruled independently of Ch'ang-an, while the court itself was at the mercy of powerful eunuchs (n.78). He unwisely overstepped the bounds of truth, however, and told them also that the T'ang was without a ruler. He informed the Uighurs that they could seize unlimited wealth through raids on northern China. By September 762 the khaghan had come south and the following month reached as far as the northern arm of the Yellow River. In the desolation and lack of defences in that part of the country he had seen ample evidence to corroborate Shih Ch'ao-i's description of T'ang weakness.

At about this time a eunuch ambassador, Liu Ch'ing-t'an (n.137), arrived from the Chinese court. Tai-tsung had ascended the throne on 18 May 762 and, since the flames of rebellion were still ablaze, he had decided to ask for help from the Uighurs whom he, as leader of the government troops in 757, had seen to be so effective in battle. Naturally the khaghan was surprised to see Liu Ch'ing-t'an, and refused to believe that he had really been sent by the T'ang government. The eunuch promptly sent a secret envoy to Ch'ang-an with the message that Mou-yü was approaching with some 100,000 men and that the state was consequently in acute danger.

Not surprisingly, the court was extremely dismayed at this intelligence, and the emperor sent the official Yao Tzu-ang to check the truth of Ch'ing-t'an's statement. Tzu-ang saw the Uighurs north of T'ai-yüan. He found that Liu had vastly exaggerated the number of their soldiers, which he placed at only about 4,000. This must have been encouraging news to Tai-tsung. But more welcome still was Yao's report that the Uighurs had brought their khatun with them.

It so happened that Mou-yü's wife was the daughter of P'u-ku Huai-en. It was through her that the situation was saved for the T'ang. She requested that a meeting should be arranged between her husband and father in T'ai-yüan. As Mou-yü's father-in-law, Huai-en was easily able to convince the Uighur khaghan that Shih Ch'ao-i had lied and that there was indeed a T'ang ruler in Ch'ang-an. Mou-yü thought better of his plans to plunder China and immediately sent a memorial to the emperor offering him assistance against the rebels.

Discussions were then held between Yao Tzu-ang and the khaghan on the best route to approach the rebel stronghold in Lo-yang from their station near T'ai-yüan. Serious disagreements arose, because Tzu-ang was very anxious that the Uighurs should see as little destroyed land as possible during the journey, in order to keep up their morale. This implied slight annoyed Mou-yü who rejected two of Tzu-ang's proposals before a compromise was reached.

By early November 762 a memorial had arrived at court from Yao Tzu-ang informing the emperor what had happened. Tai-tsung appointed his eldest son, Li Kua, the future Emperor Te-tsung, as generalissimo over all the forces. Meanwhile, the Uighurs had moved south from T'ai-yüan and camped in P'ing-lu Subprefecture (n.89), not far from Shan-chou. Li Kua, Yao Tzu-ang, and other Chinese leaders went across the Yellow River and held an interview with the khaghan to discuss the campaign against the rebels. It was then that a dreadful incident took place which coloured all Li Kua's later relations with the Uighurs and implanted in him a deep hatred for his neighbours to the north-west.

Li Kua did not share his father's belief that the Uighurs should be treated more or less as equals during critical periods of T'ang weakness. Whereas Tai-tsung had, when still heir-apparent, been prepared to salute *Yeh-hu*, the future Te-tsung refused to make any sign of respect when he entered the presence of the khaghan in P'ing-lu. This annoyed the Uighurs who demanded that he perform a ceremonial dance. A quarrel ensued between the khaghan's ministers and Tzu-ang over whether this would be proper. In the end the latter said quite definitely that a Chinese heir-apparent would never carry out such a rite before a foreign khaghan. Mou-yü and his ministers, smarting under this insult and probably still irritated at Tzu-ang's tactical victory over them during the discussions concerning the best approach to Lo-yang from T'ai-yüan, decided not to allow Tzu-ang to get away with this refusal. They had him and three other Chinese officials led away and given 100 strokes of the rod each, as a result of which two of their victims died. The Uighur chiefs were not prepared to go to the extent of insulting the Chinese heir-apparent in this way, so, on the pretext of his youth and lack of experience – he was only twenty years old (n.90) – they let him return to his own camp.

That the Uighurs were able to commit this outrage without any fear of reprisals may help to explain some of their later brutalities. Certainly, the incident suggests that Li Shu's earlier policy of yielding on minor matters was a better one than his son's. Li Kua's less compromising attitude had cost him dear.

On 13 November 762, exactly five years after the Battle of Hsiang-chi, the government forces advanced from Shan-chou. The Uighurs and P'u-ku Huai-en's men went on as forward guard, Kuo Ying-i (d.766, n.98) and the eunuch Yü Ch'ao-en (d.770, n.99) bringing up the rear. Various contingents joined them on their way to Lo-yang. Meanwhile, Li Kua remained behind in Shan-chou. Shih Ch'ao-i delegated a spy to find out the exact plans of the government forces, but a Uighur official caught him and sent him as a gift to the emperor. On 17 November, the army reached a point north of Lo-yang. It is interesting to observe that one of Ch'ao-i's followers advised him strongly that if the government forces should include Uighurs, he should not attempt battle but go back to the defence of Ho-yang north-east of Lo-yang. The adviser had no doubt observed the decisive effect a small Uighur force could produce. Ch'ao-i ignored this advice and on 20 November his forces fought a battle with the government armies in the northern suburbs of Lo-yang (n.92). The rebels were totally defeated despite Ch'ao-i's attempt to bring up some choice troops at the critical moment. After several skirmishes, Ch'ao-i fled to the east yielding the city to the T'ang.[51]

The Uighurs entered Lo-yang and remained there a few days engaging in terrible plunder and treating the inhabitants with shocking cruelty. The people were terrified of them and many sought refuge in the towers of two of the city's temples. The Uighurs replied to this by setting fire to the *stupas*. Thousands were killed or injured in an enormous and long-lasting conflagration. Even under *Yeh-hu* nothing of the sort had happened, and the incident is symptomatic of the great power of the Uighurs over the Chinese and their willingness to exploit it.

After this, the khaghan went with his men to Ho-yang, and there set up his camp. He used this place as his headquarters and, leaving his general An K'o to guard it,[52] would himself sally forth on expeditions, allowing his men to pillage the surrounding territory. According to the *Old T'ang History*, the situation was so desperate and clothing so scarce that some people were forced to go to the length of using the Classics themselves to find protection against the cold. Kuo Ying-i was made Temporary Viceroy of Lo-yang, but he found himself totally unable to put an end to the destruction and, in the end, he and many others abandoned the struggle and took part in the plunder themselves. Many of the surrounding cities in addition to the countryside were ravaged. To the Uighurs this looting was no more than their due payment for the help they had given.

[51] *TCTC* 222.7133–4, Cf. also des Rotours, *Histoire de Ngan Lou-chan*, p.349.
[52] *TCTC* 222.7135.

Shortly after the battle for Lo-yang, the T'ang effectively recaptured the Province of Ho-pei from the rebels. P'u-ku Huai-en's son, Ch'ang (n.94), together with some Uighurs, pursued Shih Ch'ao-i north, engaging in a running battle with his forces over a long distance. They trampled on his men as they fled, so that the region was strewn with the blood and bodies of the dead. At length they arrived in P'ing-chou, in the neighbourhood of modern Peking. At this point Ch'ao-i decided that the end had come. He went into a forest north-east of Shih-ch'eng Subprefecture of P'ing-chou and there committed suicide (n.95).

And so the rebellion was over. The Chinese court bestowed handsome ranks and titles on the leading Uighurs as an expression of its relief. It was obvious that it had no choice but to turn a blind eye to their brutalities. Although later history demonstrates that these were by no means completely over, the Uighurs never again behaved quite so savagely as in the Lo-yang region in 762–3. One of the reasons may well have been their conversion to Manicheism, the seeds of which were sown just at this time. It was during his sojourn in Ho-yang and Lo-yang after helping crush the rebellion that Mou-yü came into contact with the Manicheans who converted him to their religion. It may well be that even a man like Mou-yü was affected with pity and remorse at the terrible suffering he had witnessed and helped cause, and that this was an important factor in the ability of the Manicheans to influence him so deeply.

Less than two years after Mou-yü's return to Karabalghasun after helping defeat Shih Ch'ao-i, Uighur contingents again set out for China to take part in a war there. This time they came not to support the T'ang but to assist a rebellion against it, that of P'u-ku Huai-en the khaghan's father-in-law, which shook Kuan-nei Province in 764 and 765. They were led not by Mou-yü, but by several of his senior subordinates including the chief of his own clan, the Yao-lo-ko, and the chief minister Tun *mo-ho*, probably the same man who was later to carry out a successful *coup* against him.

P'u-ku Huai-en had earlier been among the most loyal defenders of the T'ang government and it was a great shock and personal tragedy for Tai-tsung that such a man should turn against him, especially since he is known to have felt a deep respect for Huai-en and to have refused to regard him as a true rebel (n.129). The circumstances leading to this revolt were as follows.

When Huai-en had visited T'ai-yüan in 762 to convince the Uighur khaghan that the T'ang Dynasty was still in control of China, Hsin Yün-ching (d.768, n.143), who held command in the city, closed the gate to

him in the belief that he was about to rebel. We have seen that it was widely believed that the Uighurs were planning to overrun the country, and Huai-en's relationship by marriage to the khaghan made the general seem extremely suspicious to Yün-ching. Nevertheless, Huai-en received no better treatment from Hsin when he visited T'ai-yüan after the rebellion to farewell the khaghan. Hsin sent the eunuch Lo Feng-hsien to court to cause trouble for Huai-en and on the way Lo was entertained as his enemy's guest. P'u-ku Huai-en was extremely friendly towards him and begged him to stay longer. When he refused, his host hid his horse as a joke, but the eunuch interpreted this as evidence that Huai-en was indeed planning rebellion and was trying to prevent the emperor from finding out about it. He reported in Ch'ang-an that P'u-ku Huai-en was plotting against the throne.

The great general, not unnaturally, felt insulted at having his name slandered thus and asked Tai-tsung to punish both Lo and Hsin. Tai-tsung attempted to patch up the quarrel, causing Huai-en to feel that he had lost face. Further suspicious circumstances came to the emperor's notice about Huai-en, and the emperor reluctantly demoted him. Immediately after this some officers seized Huai-en's son, P'u-ku Ch'ang, and killed him. This was the last straw, and Huai-en became convinced he had no choice but to try and overthrow the dynasty which seemed to him determined to blacken his name (n.106).

P'u-ku Huai-en's followers included not only Uighurs but Tibetans as well. These latter had constituted a particularly serious threat to China in the preceding period and even occupied Ch'ang-an for a few days in 763. Yet even this powerful support brought Huai-en little success in the first stage of his revolt late in 764. His forces made several sallies against cities near Ch'ang-an but suffered a serious defeat outside Pin-chou at the hands of Kuo Tzu-i's son, Hsi (d.794). They then withdrew to prepare for further assaults later on (n.110).

In the autumn of 765, P'u-ku Huai-en renewed his rebellion. This time his armies were much larger than in the previous year and contained not only Tibetans and Uighurs but also contingents from several other foreign tribes. The rebel forces advanced to seize the regions north of the Wei River with the intention of following up their victories by attacking Ch'ang-an itself. In order to increase their morale, P'u-ku Huai-en informed his men that both Kuo Tzu-i, who was the ablest Chinese general of the day, and the emperor were dead. Although the government forces under Hun Kun (737–800, n.115) defeated a Tibetan attack on Feng-t'ien at the beginning of October 765 (n.116), the anti-T'ang armies were able by the

end of the month to surround and threaten Ching-yang. There Kuo Tzu-i had set up camp to resist any onslaught against the capital, which lay to the south-west just across the Wei.

It so happened that P'u-ku Huai-en had died late in September 765, and the news of his death reached the Uighurs and Tibetans surrounding Ching-yang towards the end of the following month (n.117) just as they were preparing to attack the city. The two groups of foreigners immediately started quarrelling among themselves over which group should take on the leadership. This fact came to Kuo Tzu-i's notice and he promptly sent an envoy to the Uighurs asking them to unite with him in pushing back the Tibetans. The Uighurs were surprised when the envoy claimed to have been sent by Kuo Tzu-i, whom they believed was dead. They did not accept the messenger as genuine and demanded to see Tzu-i himself. When this was reported to the general, he agreed to present himself as asked, even though his subordinates warned him that the Uighur request was probably a ploy aimed at killing him. Tzu-i came out of the city gate and stood in full view of the Uighurs. Even this did not convince the Uighurs who demanded, as a final proof, that he remove his armour. Tzu-i complied, and came forward on his horse alone, unaccompanied by body-guards. The Uighurs had no choice but to accept that P'u-ku Huai-en had lied to them; they immediately submitted themselves to Kuo Tzu-i's authority and agreed to help him fight the Tibetans (n.118). Furthermore, they apologised for their part so far in the rebellion and swore a solemn oath with him. On no other occasion did a Chinese receive from a band of Uighurs the respect and reverence with which the Uighurs now treated Tzu-i.

This sudden change of heart is not altogether surprising. It seems to me probable that the Uighurs' initial support for P'u-ku Huai-en was based more on tribal relationships than on outright opposition to the T'ang. Huai-en was not only of T'ieh-le extraction himself but also the father of their ruler's wife. His influence over the Uighurs had been apparent for some time. With his death was removed the principal reason why they should make war against the T'ang. Moreover, they had no love for the Tibetans and their alliance with their south-western neighbours was quite abnormal. It is important also that the Uighurs respected the qualities of courage shown by a man like Kuo Tzu-i. They had fought on his side during the An Lu-shan rebellion and their reluctance to oppose him is evident from the fact that P'u-ku Huai-en should have felt called upon to tell them that he was dead and would not be at the head of any T'ang army which might resist them. Finally, it is striking that the leaders of the Uighur

forces included Tun *mo-ho* who was later to initiate a decidedly pro-Chinese policy at the Uighur court. His loyalty to the T'ang was certainly none too firm, but I think it likely that, unless tribal and family relationships dictated otherwise, he was willing all through his career to adopt a friendly attitude towards the Chinese.

The day after Kuo Tzu-i and the Uighurs swore their pact, Tzu-i sent six Uighurs for audience with the emperor in Ch'ang-an. The emperor sent out a contingent under Po Yüan-kuang (d.786, n.124) to help against the Tibetans. Early in November 765, Yüan-kuang began with a short expedition to ascertain the power of the enemy, who, after fleeing from Ching-yang some days before, had gone along the Ching River to Pin-chou and now reached a point not far west of Ling-t'ai. Po found them much weakened by cold. The Tibetans had wrapped felt around them in a vain attempt to find protection against the freezing weather and were moving slowly forward on their homeward march. Yüan-kuang and the Uighurs seized the opportunity and early the following morning made a sudden surprise attack. Large numbers of men were killed or taken prisoner. A few days later, a second battle was fought against those who had succeeded in escaping, and the Tibetans were disastrously defeated.

This was the end of the war. Several hundred Uighurs went to the capital to receive rewards for their services. As usual, the emperor gave them sumptuous banquets and enormous quantities of silk in recognition of their assistance, even though it was necessary to impose severe financial hardships on the court officials to meet the cost. After that the Uighurs returned to their own country.

The campaign just discussed was the last time that the Uighurs gave the T'ang government major and effective military aid within China proper. Indeed in only one subsequent conflict, in 790, did T'ang and Uighur armies fight on the same side. The enemy was again the Tibetans and the object of the fighting was to retake from them the western Protectorate of Pei-t'ing. This had been as much under Uighur as Chinese influence (n.207). Furthermore, the war differed from that just described in that the military assistance of the Uighurs proved ineffective.

During the crisis of the An Lu-shan rebellion and the continuing troubles which followed it, the Chinese court had considered it necessary to concentrate the talent of the empire's best generals and choice troops at the centre of the country. As a result, the duty of governing the far western cities fell upon men of mediocre ability with inadequate soldiery to support them. The powerful Tibetan state took advantage of this situation and seized much territory from the Chinese. Virtually all Lung-yu Province

and further west fell into Tibetan hands (n.194), although the Provinces of Pei-t'ing and An-hsi in the far west remained, as far as the Chinese were concerned, under Chinese control. Naturally communications were difficult and it eventually became quite impossible for tribute or embassies to penetrate from the western cities to Ch'ang-an. Several missions were sent to inform the emperor of this unfortunate situation, but none of them got through to Ch'ang-an. Eventually in 781 (n.199), after a gap of more than a decade (n.200), an embassy was able to push its way through to court by taking a route through Uighur territory. Once this solution was found, all communications from the west relied on the acquiescence of the Uighurs for passage and the latter, seeing in this necessity a good means of making money, promptly charged an enormous transit toll. So, although the way was now open, it was still both difficult and expensive, and the toll made the Uighurs extremely unpopular among those forced by necessity to pay it.

Near the city of Pei-t'ing there lived some families of the Sha-t'o, a Turkic people at that time dependent on the Uighurs (n.193), and other Uighur subjects, the most important of whom belonged to the Kharlukh tribes. These people were not exempted from the toll and they considered that, since they had forfeited their independence to the Uighurs, they should at least enjoy free access through Uighur territory. They therefore secretly transferred their allegiance to the Tibetans.

If the various tribes had good cause to resent Uighur behaviour, the Tibetans also had their own reasons for wanting to take Pei-t'ing. It was a strategically placed city and in the event its loss meant the end of effective Chinese influence in the western regions (n.191). Moreover, in 784 the Tibetans had assisted the T'ang against the Chu Tz'u rebellion, to which I shall be returning later, and the arranged price for their intervention had been that the Chinese should cede them certain territories, including Pei-t'ing. However, the Emperor Te-tsung had gone back on the agreement after the rebellion was over.[53] Tibetan reprisals for this breach of promise were prompt and devastating, and the appropriation of Pei-t'ing was the last of their acts of vengeance.[54]

It was in this context that the Uighurs undertook for the fifth time to assist China in a crisis and to prevent the fall of Pei-t'ing. They had much to lose if the campaign failed, not only the influence of their empire in the west but also the transit toll which they had charged for passage to Ch'ang-an in recent years. For the Chinese, on the other hand, this was much less

[53] See Demiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa*, pp.170–1.
[54] Ibid., p.182.

important than the An Lu-shan and P'u-ku Huai-en rebellions. At stake for the T'ang was not the dynasty itself but only its western outposts. To say that the Chinese were assisting the Uighurs would be just as accurate as the converse.

The Uighur chief minister and general, *Hsieh yü-chia-ssu*, who was already the principal power behind the throne and was later to found a dynasty of his own, went to the west to try and prevent the Tibetans from taking Pei-t'ing. In the middle of 790 he fought a battle with the allied forces of the Tibetans, Sha-t'o and others, but was defeated. The Chinese leader of Pei-t'ing, Yang Hsi-ku, fled to Hsi-chou. *Hsieh yü-chia-ssu* returned to Karabalghasun, but later the same year (n.206) he left with an enormous force on a second expedition, to retake Pei-t'ing. He summoned Yang Hsi-ku from Hsi-chou to help him, and the latter duly came. The combined Uighur and Chinese forces were unexpectedly attacked and decisively defeated with enormous losses. Hsi-ku escaped to Hsi-chou with his sadly depleted army but *Hsieh yü-chia-ssu* then persuaded the Chinese general to accompany him back to the Uighur capital. He had promised to repatriate Hsi-ku but, as it happened, killed him towards the end of 791. This betrayal appears to have been the result of the humiliation which must still have smarted within the Uighur minister and need not be interpreted to indicate any special hostility towards China on his part.

It is clear from the preceding that the period when the Uighurs were of vital use to the Chinese was over. And with it passed the era when the Uighurs could employ their military strength to insult the T'ang. Under the second dynasty, the Uighurs concentrated their attentions more on the territory to the west than on China, and although the T'ang still retained a lively fear of their northern neighbours (n.244), they felt free to turn down Uighur requests. There were ways in which earlier Uighur military assistance continued to produce ill effects on China, but the forces of the Uighur empire were never again invited to take part in a war alongside T'ang armies.

One final incident reveals how far the Chinese attitude had changed by the time the period of the Uighur empire was drawing to its end. In 821, P'ei Tu (*c.*765–839, n.279), one of the most distinguished officials of his time, was delegated by the Chinese Emperor Mu-tsung to suppress the independent military governor Wang T'ing-ts'ou (d.834). This man seized power without authority from Ch'ang-an in Ho-pei, where separatist inclinations remained strong. The Uighur general Li I-chieh came with 3,000 soldiers to give unsolicited help. The emperor was not so sure that he wanted the assistance and believed that the soldiers might be more

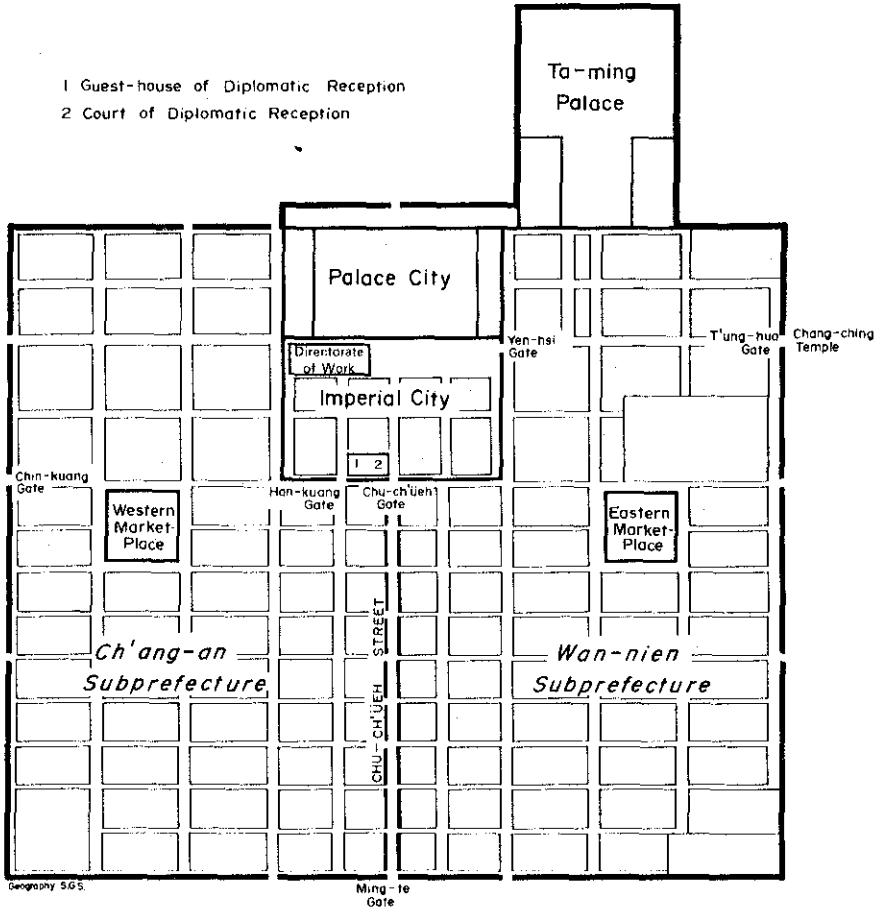
dangerous than valuable to China. He discussed the matter with his courtiers, and they decided that, in view of the high-handedness and cruelty the Uighurs had displayed during and after Shih Ch'ao-i's rebellion, their services should be refused. An ambassador was sent to tell them about this decision. He met them at Feng-chou not far from the north-western bend of the Yellow River. At first I-chieh would not accept the court's verdict. However, the emperor gave him 70,000 pieces of silk, whereupon he left for home with his men on 18 April 822. By that time, in fact, Mu-tsung had already decided to come to terms with Wang T'ing-ts'ou and abandon the campaign against him. Possible victory with Uighur assistance was deemed less desirable than compromise without it.

Uighur Violence in or near China's Main Cities

One of the results of the strong position gained by the Uighurs after they had helped crush the An Lu-shan rebellion was that they were able to carry out destructive acts in China's major cities. I have already cited cases of this sort in areas immediately affected by the campaigns against the rebels. However, Uighur violence was not confined to such places and lasted many years after the rebellion had been suppressed. In some cases one can ascribe it to the Uighurs' natural love for pillage, in others to their desire to take revenge for an insult. However, in few instances can we be really sure of the motives for the violence since the accounts are always presented to us from the point of view of the Chinese, who assumed the worst intentions in the Uighurs and were keen to blacken their name.

The first case occurred on 22 February 763, that is, not long after Lo-yang had been retaken from Shih Ch'ao-i, but in Ch'ang-an which had not been directly involved in the fighting against him. Some Uighur soldiers came to the capital from the battles against the rebels and at night hacked down one of the gates of the Imperial City, entering the Court of Diplomatic Reception. Perhaps they felt it was their right to lodge in that Court, since it was customary to house distinguished foreign visitors there.

Later on, Uighurs who did actually reside in the Court of Diplomatic Reception proved themselves on occasion equally offensive, and the authorities found it impossible to control them. Early in 771 or 772, some of the Uighurs broke out of the Court without warning and started attacking the children of the city. The officials tried to stop them, but to no avail. The Uighurs only grew more annoyed and some of their cavalry started hacking at the Han-kuang and Chu-ch'üeh Gates (n.132), which lay to the right and left of the Square of Diplomatic Reception leading from the



Map 5.

Imperial City into the residential areas. All the gates of the Imperial City were locked and the eunuch Liu Ch'ing-t'an was sent to put an end to the troubles. Liu had earlier had some experience in dealing with the Uighurs and succeeded in his mission.

These actions were the first of a series of such outbursts performed by the Uighurs during those years. In August 772 they made another similar volley in the capital. They came out into the wards and market-places of Ch'ang-an and made violent attacks on the people and their property. The leading official of the western half of the city, Shao Yüeh (n.133), did his best to make them desist. They turned upon him and pursued him up one of the main streets of the city, seizing his horse. Yüeh was lucky enough to escape, but the Uighurs were able to continue their ravage with impunity.

Another unpleasant incident occurred a few years later. In 774 or 775 a Uighur killed someone in one of the streets of Ch'ang-an. The Governor of the Capital, Li Kan (n.137), arrested him, but the emperor decided that it would be impolitic to punish the man, and he was let off without examination. On 16 October 775, another murder was committed by a Uighur, this time in the Eastern Market-place. He was taken to prison, but when the Uighur leader Ch'ih-hsin heard what had happened, he came out of the Court of Diplomatic Reception and broke into the gaol, setting the prisoner free and wounding the prison officials while he was about it.

Feeling against the Uighurs ran high everywhere in China that their presence was apparent. So it is to be expected that the violence was sometimes started by the Chinese themselves. In the middle of 778 a Uighur diplomatic mission passed through Ho-chung on its way home. This was a major city near the south-eastern bend of the Yellow River and lay on the normal route from Ch'ang-an to Karabalghasun. Some Chinese soldiers who happened to be stationed there pillaged the baggage of the Uighur envoys. This action so outraged the Uighurs that they replied by looting the wards and market-places of the city (n.144).

Apart from Ch'ang-an, the most important Chinese city to suffer at the hands of the Uighurs was Lo-yang, and I have already noted in the previous section how the city was affected. These two were called respectively the western and eastern capitals. T'ai-yüan, in present-day Shansi, also came under attack later in Tai-tsung's reign. From the point of view of the Uighurs this was an important town, being a major point on the route between the Chinese and Uighur capitals. On 22 February 778 a group of them made an onslaught against it, possibly to take revenge for the poor reception P'u-ku Huai-en and their khaghan Mou-yü had

received there from Hsin Yün-ching when the two had met with each other near T'ai-yüan both before and after the defeat of Shih Ch'ao-i. The Uighurs were afraid of Yün-ching, but he had died in 768 and the city was now governed by Pao Fang (n.139), whose bent was civil and artistic rather than military.

Pao sent out some troops to oppose the Uighur contingent. A certain Li Tzu-liang (733–95, n.140), advised him against accepting a challenge of battle from the Uighurs. He considered that it would be wiser to block their way north by placing a pair of ramparts on the road, and then to attack them from the rear. Pao Fang refused to follow this suggestion and on 27 February 778 his army was beaten severely at a battle in Yang-ch'ü just north-east of T'ai-yüan. The Uighur band proceeded home on their way to Karabalghasun but, shortly after, the Governor-general of Tai-chou Chang Kuang-sheng (n.141), intercepted them in the Yang-wu Valley near Tai-chou and defeated them.

The most striking feature of the incidents I have mentioned is that all of them occurred during the reigns of Mou-yü among the Uighurs and the Chinese Emperor Tai-tsung. They range from simple episodes like murder, such as can happen in any city, to full-scale battles such as those outside T'ai-yüan and Tai-chou. Their significance lies in the fact that in all cases except the last mentioned – Chang Kuang-sheng's victory – the Chinese were virtually powerless to prevent the Uighurs from behaving as they pleased.

If episodes of the sort described happened in other periods of the Uighur empire, the historiographers chose not to record them. This in itself demonstrates that Sino-Uighur relations in fact reached their lowest point during Mou-yü's reign, even though his forces had helped defeat Shih Ch'ao-i. In fact, one is tempted to conclude that the historians were implying by their selection of material that Tai-tsung had made a mistake in requesting Uighur aid against Shih Ch'ao-i. The impact of the Uighur armies does not seem to have been nearly as decisive in the 762 battle for Lo-yang as in those of 757 for the two capitals. Might not Ch'ao-i have been defeated without the Uighurs and a great deal of suffering and humiliation prevented?

Underlying the resentment of the Chinese against the Uighur presence was the fear that they might actually invade China. That such an event was likely had been obvious since 762 when it was averted by the narrowest of margins. There are signs that the possibility weighed heavily on the Chinese mind during the last few years of Tai-tsung's reign. Not only did most of the incidents reported above occur at this time, but the Uighurs

also began making raids near the frontier areas. One against Hsia-chou in the Ordos took place in 775–6 but was repelled (n.138). In 778 Hun Kun was sent to the Chen-wu Army, stationed near the north-eastern bend of the Yellow River, in order to eject some Uighur soldiers who had been terrifying the people of the border regions (n.144). But a much more concrete sign of the Chinese fear of invasion can be seen in the fact that in March 776 they strengthened the Shuo-fang Army, a vital position for the defence of the borders, with the specific aim of preparing for a Uighur attack (n.138).

This was not an unreasonable move. Mou-yü did in fact plan an invasion at the end of his reign. As it happened, however, his forces did not march south. He was killed in a *coup d'état,* the immediate aim of which was to prevent his proposed war against the T'ang.

Tun Mo-ho's Reign

The leader of the *coup* and successor to Mou-yü was Tun *mo-ho* Khaghan, under whom a much more friendly attitude towards the Chinese evolved in Karabalghasun. Yet there were some extremely curious features of Uighur behaviour towards the T'ang during his reign and the path towards greater friendship was by no means a smooth one.

Tun *mo-ho* was anti-Sogdian and apparently also anti-Manichean (n.146). This in itself was one factor which cleared the way towards better relations with China. The influence of the Sogdians in the Uighur court hardly favoured China, and it was they who suggested to Mou-yü that he invade the Central Kingdom. Tun *mo-ho* is reported in the *New T'ang History* to have told Mou-yü, 'The T'ang is a great state and has never acted treacherously towards us'. The historian may well have put words into his mouth to glorify China, but there is no reason to doubt that Tun *mo-ho* was favourably disposed towards his great southern neighbour at the time of his accession.

However, the new Chinese Emperor Te-tsung still nourished a deep hatred for the Uighurs because of the humiliation they had inflicted on him, as heir-apparent, during the interview at P'ing-lu just before the battle for Lo-yang in 762. Moreover, an incident at the beginning of Te-tsung's reign in China and Tun's among the Uighurs showed that it would not be easy to institute a pro-Chinese policy in Karabalghasun. What happened was as follows.

The Sogdians were particularly noted as a trading people and, in view of the influence which that people had enjoyed in Mou-yü's entourage, it is not surprising that we find them assisting the Uighurs in their business

affairs under his rule. When a group of Uighurs went to China to sell their horses, which was an annual affair, they would frequently take some Sogdians with them. Often these traders preferred to remain behind in Ch'ang-an where they would have more scope for their abilities than at Karabalghasun, and before long there was a not inconsiderable community both of Uighurs and Uighur Sogdians in the Chinese capital, doing trade and making large sums of money.[55] They lived among the Chinese, adopted Chinese dress, married Chinese women and built fine houses. 'They daily became more and more unrestrained, grasping and perverse, and the officials did not dare examine them.'[56] Soon after his accession on 12 June 779, Te-tsung decided to try and put a stop to this competition which was deleterious to the trade of his own people. On 28 August that year he issued an edict that these Uighurs and Sogdians should refrain from wearing Chinese garb (n.150). He also directly ordered the Uighur chief T'u-tung, Tun *mo-ho*'s uncle, to take as many of them as possible back to Karabalghasun.[57]

Accordingly, T'u-tung loaded up a train of camels in 780 and took the road, accompanied by a large number of the Sogdian and Uighur merchants. These were unwilling to part with their Chinese wives and concubines, so, realising that it would be impossible to obtain permission to take the women, they hid them in bags among the goods in the camel train. The whole procession stayed for three months in Chen-wu. Of course the women required food, and the Chinese official Chang Kuang-sheng – the victor over the Uighurs in the Yang-wu Valley in 778 – noticed that the bill for supplying the train was too large. He sent an underling to poke the bags with an awl, and the presence of the Chinese girls was quickly discovered.

The Sogdians had heard of the change of régime in Karabalghasun and about the massacre which the new khaghan had perpetrated against their race. They therefore tried to flee from the party during the long stay in Chen-wu. T'u-tung kept a careful watch to prevent this, and very few succeeded in escaping. Finally, the Sogdians tried to come to an agreement with Chang Kuang-sheng and to persuade him to kill the Uighurs. Kuang-sheng adopted this suggestion, but decided to include the Sogdians in the massacre as well.

[55] Pulleyblank (*Background*, p.41) points out that merchants of Sogdian origin were important in Chinese commerce before the An Lu-shan rebellion. However, the growth of trade conducted by Uighurs and Sogdians allied to the Uighurs does not appear to have become significant until after the rebellion.

[56] *TCTC* 225.7265.

[57] *TCTC* 226.7287–8.

He immediately informed the emperor of his plan, explaining that it would be an excellent way of cutting down Uighur power, since their strength depended largely on Sogdian aid and the economic benefits which the superior trading skill of this people was able to effect. Te-tsung may have hated the Uighurs but could not possibly sanction such an act. Kuang-sheng sent in three memorials hoping to persuade him to permit it (n.152). When this failed, Chang deliberately created a *casus belli* which would justify his design. He sent a junior officer to insult the Uighur leader by publicly refusing him the proper respect. T'u-tung was annoyed and, as Kuang-sheng had expected, had the officer whipped. Kuang-sheng replied by inviting the Uighurs, and also the Sogdians on whose suggestion he had devised the plan, to a banquet, where he gave them much to eat and drink and then killed his intoxicated guests (n.153).

Two Uighurs were spared. They were sent to Karabalghasun to tell the khaghan that the Uighurs had flogged a great general and had been planning to take Chen-wu, so that he, Kuang-sheng, had felt called upon to massacre them all. The wives and concubines of the dead men were meanwhile sent back to Ch'ang-an. The Uighurs demanded vengeance for this monstrous act, but Te-tsung took only token measures against Chang Kuang-sheng (n.154).

Some time later, the coffins of T'u-tung and other leaders were transported back to Karabalghasun with an embassy led by Yüan Hsiu (n.148). He had actually been sent to the Uighurs in July 780 to give the new khaghan formal recognition, but broke his journey in T'ai-yüan for a while because of the tense situation (n.155). When Yüan's mission arrived in the Uighur capital, its members waited about two months before they heard what Tun *mo-ho* was proposing to do. Eventually the message was delivered to them: the khaghan's ministers all considered that the Chinese envoys should be killed, but he himself could see no point in deliberate revenge, and had decided that the Chinese could atone for their crime by the immediate payment of all their debts due to the purchase of Uighur horses, a considerable sum amounting to 1,800,000 ligatures.

This decision of the khaghan's was extremely magnanimous. Not only was the compensation demanded no more than what he considered a just debt, but his action was taken for proper reasons and against opposition. It seems to me to indicate also a very strong desire to be on good terms with the Chinese. The khaghan could certainly have taken revenge and got away with it, and I think there can be little doubt what Mou-yü would have done under the circumstances. Although he might have expected far worse, Te-tsung was livid at the outcome of the whole affair, but since

he realised the power of the Uighurs and the justice of their demand, he contained his anger and, in the latter half of 782, paid up the value of the sum in gold, silver, and silk.

At about the same time as this, serious trouble was brewing in China, which was yet again to bring the T'ang to the verge of destruction. It resulted in the rebellion of Chu T'ao (744–85)[58] and Chu Tz'u (742–84),[59] in which Uighur forces were once more involved – this time against the T'ang.

When Te-tsung had first come to the Chinese throne, he had taken serious steps towards curbing the powers of the military governors in the provinces. Seeing their influence threatened, some of these warlords in the north-east decided to declare their total independence of Ch'ang-an. Towards the end of 782 an entire official establishment was created under the leadership of Chu T'ao, whose government was based on Yu-chou. The emperor appealed for help from Li Hsi-lieh (d.786)[60] of Hsü-chou, who had been extremely loyal up to this point, but Li declared himself on the side of the dissidents. Te-tsung's position grew weaker still when an army summoned to his defence mutinied in Ch'ang-an and even penetrated the imperial palaces. Te-tsung fled to Feng-t'ien not far north-west of his capital, and on 2 November 783 Chu T'ao's elder brother Tz'u installed himself as emperor. Chu Tz'u then attempted to advance on Feng-t'ien but was thrown back by Li Huai-kuang (729–85).[61] Although Li himself joined the rebels the following March owing to the insulting behaviour towards him of the chief minister Lu Ch'i (d.785, n.177), the tide began to turn against the Chus and their supporters. At the beginning of 784, Te-tsung issued an amnesty which persuaded several of their most important leaders, including Wang Wu-chün (735–801),[62] to defect to the side of the T'ang, and the remaining rebel generals started quarrelling among themselves. An attempt by Chu T'ao to advance towards the south was decisively defeated outside Pei-chou by Wang Wu-chün, and Chu Tz'u was murdered by his own men. Li Sheng (727–93)[63] captured Ch'ang-an with Tibetan assistance, and Te-tsung re-entered the city early in August 784. Chu T'ao submitted soon after.[64]

58 Chu T'ao's biographies are given in *CTS* 143.1b–3a, *HTS* 212.1b–4b.

59 See Chu Tz'u's biographies in *CTS* 200B.1a–4b, *HTS* 225B.3a–9a.

60 Li Hsi-lieh's biography is given in *CTS* 145.8a–9b, *HTS* 225B.1a–3a and outlined by des Rotours in *Traité des fonctionnaires*, pp.651–2.

61 On Li Huai-kuang see *CTS* 121.9b–12b, *HTS* 224A.7b–9b.

62 Wang Wu-chün's life is recorded in *CTS* 142.4b–7b, *HTS* 211.4b–7b.

63 Li Sheng's career is recorded in *CTS* 133.1a–11a, *HTS* 154.1a–5b, and summarised in des Rotours, *Traité des fonctionnaires*, p.857.

64 For the main events of the Chu rebellion see also Franke, *Geschichte des chinesischen Reiches*, vol. II, pp.475–8.

The part of the Uighurs in these events was actually not of great significance and does not rate a single mention in the Uighur biographies in the standard histories. They took part only in the campaign of Chu T'ao and were not involved in the much more important battles nearer the capital.

In about 780 Chu T'ao took a Uighur woman as a concubine. She had earlier been married to the chief of the Hsi people, who lived north-east of Yu-chou, but when her husband died she started her return home. On the way she passed through the territory under T'ao's control, and he asked to marry her. At least one group of the Uighurs was consequently well disposed towards T'ao, and a *ta-kan* came with an army of several thousand to assist him in his proposed march to the south. They were, as usual, given rich rewards for their promised aid, large quantities of jade, silk and also people.[65]

T'ao and his followers besieged Pei-chou, and the Uighurs pillaged the surrounding subprefectures.[66] Wang Wu-chün believed Chu's strength was largely dependent on his Uighur allies, but was nevertheless confident he could break the siege and defeat him.[67] The *ta-kan* shared Wang's belief in Uighur power and assured Chu T'ao that victory could not but be theirs. He told the rebel, 'When we Uighurs fight with a neighbouring state in a country, we usually destroy several thousand of the neighbouring state's cavalry with but 500 of our own, just as if we were sweeping leaves. Now we have so far received incalculable quantities of gold and silk, oxen and wine, and think it is time that we served you, the great king. Tomorrow, I suggest that you should ride your horse up to a high mound, and watch how we Uighurs cut down Wu-chün's cavalry on your behalf, so that not a single one of his horses returns.'[68]

In the event Wang's confidence was to be proved justified and the *ta-kan*'s ill-advised. The battle was fought on 29 May 784. Wang Wu-chün sent a battle commander to lie in wait while he himself confronted the Uighurs. The latter rushed against him, but he got his cavalry to rein in their horses and dodge the onslaught. The Uighurs appeared at Wang's rear and this time he responded fiercely to their move. Suddenly the battle commander launched a devastating surprise attack from the side, and the Uighurs were scattered. The action was decisive and Chu T'ao's forces were completely defeated.[69] His southward thrust had been thwarted.

[65] *HTS* 212.4a.
[66] *TCTC* 229.7396.
[67] *TCTC* 230.7427.
[68] *TCTC* 231.7431–2.
[69] *TCTC* 231.7432, *HTS* 211.6b–7a.

How can it be explained that the Uighurs, whose khaghan had so recently treated the T'ang so fairly, should suddenly turn against it and assist an anti-T'ang rebellion? Had the khaghan really decided to avenge himself after all? In view of his behaviour before and, even more, after this revolt, I think this is most unlikely. Perhaps the most striking feature of the Uighur force in the Chu T'ao rebellion was its leadership. Whereas the Uighur troops which helped against An Ch'ing-hsü in 757 had been led by the khaghan's son, those against Shih Ch'ao-i in 762 by the khaghan himself and those in 764–5 on behalf of P'u-ku Huai-en by several chief ministers, the Uighur troops which supported Chu were led merely by a *ta-kan*. It seems to me probable that this man was the subordinate of a Uighur leader related to Chu T'ao's concubine and that he belonged to the faction which wanted to avenge Chang Kuang-sheng's massacre. Tribal allegiances must have been at the root of this curious case of Uighur assistance. The Chinese sources give no indication that Tun *mo-ho* himself supported Chu T'ao's rebellion. I suspect that the *ta-kan*'s troops actually went to help him behind the khaghan's back and contrary to his wishes.

Whatever the truth on this matter, the last years of Tun's reign show a decidedly friendly attitude on his part towards the T'ang. On 2 October 787, an embassy arrived at the Chinese court from Tun *mo-ho* to give 'tribute' and ask for a marriage alliance. Te-tsung no doubt heaved a heavy sigh when he saw the embassy, and turned for advice to his respected chief minister Li Pi (722–89, n.159). The latter advised in favour of the marriage and pointed out that since the P'ing-lu affair, which still rankled with the emperor, a new khaghan, one favourable to China, had ascended the throne at Karabalghasun. Neither he nor the emperor raised the question of the Uighur part in the Chu T'ao rebellion, which underlines the insignificant impact that role had produced on the Chinese court. In the end Te-tsung overcame his bitter feelings towards the Uighurs. He yielded to Pi's advice and from then on good relations between the two rulers were secure. He even went to unusual lengths to be polite to a Uighur princess who had accompanied the embassy from Karabalghasun.

In the euphoria which followed his marriage with the Chinese emperor's daughter, Tun *mo-ho* became positively subservient to Te-tsung. According to the *New T'ang History*, 'he sent up a memorial to the emperor which showed him extreme reverence and said, "In former times we were elder and younger brother, but now I am your son-in-law, your half-son" '. Any hard feelings Tun may have felt owing to the Chang Kuang-sheng massacre seem to have evaporated by this time.

Diplomatic Relations and Marriages

The occasion which brought about this dramatic improvement in Sino-Uighur relations was the diplomatic marriage between the Princess of Hsien-an and Tun *mo-ho*. The granting of brides to the khaghans was in fact one of the main aspects of diplomatic relations between the two states. Before dealing with it in detail, however, let us first turn to the general subject of Sino-Uighur diplomatic intercourse over the period 744 to 840.

The official embassies reported in the Chinese sources between the Uighurs and Chinese fall into four main categories.[70] The first is that of missions from the Uighurs with no purpose other than what the Chinese call 'tributary'. The Uighurs did not recognise Chinese suzerainty over them and would have thought of them as good-will rather than as tributary embassies. They arrived at the Chinese court throughout the whole period of the empire, even when the relations between the two states were distinctly cool, except for one period of about a decade during '*Huai-hsin*'s' reign.

The second category is that of embassies concerned with Uighur assistance to the Chinese government against rebellions. I have dealt with this subject elsewhere. The third is that of missions from the Uighurs to announce the death of their khaghan or khatun and those from China to announce the death of an emperor or 'appoint', that is recognise, a new ruler. All the khaghans of the empire period were formally recognised by the Chinese court, except the usurper of 790 and the last ruler, Prince Ho-sa, who reigned from 839 to 840.

The Chinese sources make frequent complaints that Uighur ambassadors failed to behave with due respect and politeness and sometimes even caused trouble by plundering the countryside. They also abound in moralistic little stories about how the Chinese dealt with this problem by superior diplomacy. It appears to have been mainly the Chinese innate resentment against the Uighurs that led to the writing and preservation of such accounts. Certainly, they cannot be dismissed as fabrications but do not in general appear to carry much significance for the reader who wishes to trace the course of Sino-Uighur relations.

The final category is that of embassies connected with a specific Uighur request made of the Chinese court. In 768 and 771 Manichean temples were built in China, apparently at the behest of Uighur missions.[71] A further embassy early in 807 also asked that Manichean temples be

[70] I have listed all these embassies in my 'Sino-Uighur Diplomatic and Trade Contacts', pp.221–38.

[71] See Chavannes and Pelliot, 'Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine', pp.261–3.

constructed in Lo-yang and T'ai-yüan, and the court gave its permission (n.230). Manicheism was a religion the Chinese government did not like and had proscribed, except for foreigners, in 732.[72] It was in fact principally the power of the Uighurs that persuaded successive emperors to tolerate it after Mou-yü's conversion. No sooner had the Uighur empire fallen than the Emperor Wu-tsung (840–6) instituted a systematic persecution against Manicheism, along with other foreign religions, and it died out in China after that time, except as a secret society.[73]

But by far the most important embassies in this fourth category were those which asked for or welcomed a Chinese bride for the Uighur khaghan. Throughout Chinese history diplomatic marriages were a standard means of keeping the ferocity of the peripheral peoples at bay, so it is not surprising that embassies connected with these marriages are of paramount importance in revealing the state of diplomatic friendship between the two countries.

Mo-yen-ch'o asked for a marital alliance and was granted one in 758. The khaghan's bride was the Princess of Ning-kuo, the second daughter of Su-tsung (n.49), and she was of unusual significance in being the first daughter of a T'ang emperor to be given in marriage to a foreign ruler. Despite being honoured in this way, Mo-yen-ch'o did not, so far as is recorded, send an embassy from Karabalghasun especially to welcome his bride and he received that which brought her very coldly indeed. Nevertheless, he did subsequently send envoys to thank the emperor for the marriage.

Mou-yü married successively two daughters of P'u-ku Huai-en. Of the five Chinese princesses sent to the Uighurs who became the khatun, these were the only two who were not daughters of an emperor. No great ritual is reported in the sources connected with the marriage of these women with the khaghan and no embassies were sent to greet them. It is true that the first khaghans enjoyed far less wealth than their successors. It is also true that Mou-yü married his first wife before he had ascended the throne and that by the time he married his second, P'u-ku Huai-en had rebelled against the T'ang. Yet the Emperor Tai-tsung had respected Huai-en so deeply that even after the general's rebellion he took this daughter into his palaces and brought her up as his own (n.129). It was consequently no slight to the Uighurs that she should be chosen to marry Mou-yü. The relatively blasé manner in which the early khaghans accepted their Chinese brides and their failure to show much appreciation were certainly symptoms of their cool feelings towards China.

[72] Ibid., pp.154–5.

[73] An account of the persecution against Manicheism is given ibid., pp.284–303.

On the other hand, when Te-tsung granted his eighth daughter, the Princess of Hsien-an (n.168), to Tun *mo-ho*, the Uighur khaghan went to a great deal of trouble to give her a splendid welcome. He sent out an enormous embassy of over 1,000 people, and a large number of horses as tribute to the court. Indeed, so large was the embassy that some of it was asked to stay in T'ai-yüan and not to proceed to the Chinese capital. As it happened, the princess in whose honour this mission was arranged lived a long time among the Uighurs. She became the wife of several successive Uighur rulers, of both dynasties, and died in 808.

The last Chinese bride given to a Uighur ruler of the empire period was the Princess of T'ai-ho, who went to Karabalghasun in 821 to marry '*Ch'ung-te*' Khaghan (821–4). It is worthwhile to discuss this marriage and its preliminaries in some detail, since they are of tremendous value in determining the development of relations between China and the Uighurs of the second dynasty. Indeed this marital alliance is by far the best documented of all aspects of Sino-Uighur contacts during the years 795–840, and in those sections of the standard histories dealing with this subject there is very little material which is not related to the marriage in some way or another.

The Uighurs under '*Pao-i*' Khaghan actually began pressing the Chinese court to grant them a princess as early as 813, when *I-nan-chu* was sent to make the request. Before the Chinese court could make up its mind how to react, a Uighur force of several thousand cavalry arrived at the P'i-t'i Springs on the north-western frontier. It was probably upon hearing about this development, which was interpreted in China as the beginning of a Uighur invasion, that *I-nan-chu* left Ch'ang-an without waiting for an answer to the request. Meanwhile the Chinese did what they could to strengthen the defences of the north-western border (n.243).

It seems to me extremely doubtful that this sudden sally towards China was intended to put pressure on the Chinese Emperor Hsien-tsung to agree to the marriage, since the invasion did not eventuate despite the prevarication of the Chinese court. Nevertheless, there were certainly many people in Ch'ang-an who believed that the Uighurs were planning to invade China (n.244) and there was one faction at court which advised the emperor to grant the marriage in the interests of the state's security.

This clique was led by Li Chiang (764–830, n.245), chief minister from 811 to 814. Shortly after he resigned, he sent a memorial to the emperor setting forth in detail the reasons for his view. He pointed out the inadequate defences of the borders and believed it would be inviting trouble under these circumstances to irritate the Uighurs. He also raised the

possibility that by refusing their request, the emperor would drive them into the arms of their traditional enemies the Tibetans, which could well result in an alliance between the two states against China. On the other hand, to grant the Uighurs a bride would intensify the Tibetan hostility towards the Uighurs by arousing their jealousy. The question of the cost of the marriage had naturally arisen, and many had suggested that it would be beyond the resources of the imperial treasury. Li Chiang's estimate was that by comparison with the amount of money it would probably save the empire, the cost was but a negligible sum.

Hsien-tsung was unmoved by these weighty arguments. It was now more than a year since *I-nan-chu*'s departure and he had heard nothing further from the Uighurs. No invasion had taken place and the Tibetans had been very quiet for some years. Moreover, by this time Li Chiang's influence had weakened at court, and the government was largely dominated by the powerful eunuch T'u-t'u Ch'eng-ts'ui, who was a bitter enemy of Li Chiang's.

Early in 817 another embassy arrived from the Uighurs with a request for a marriage. At this time Hsien-tsung's hands were full trying to defeat the rebellion of the independent military governor Wu Yüan-chi (n.251), which was not suppressed until later the same year. He ordered his officials to make an estimate of the cost involved in the marriage and found it to be exorbitant. The Uighur request was therefore refused, at least until conditions improved.

'*Pao-i*' did not leave the matter there. Early in 820 a third mission arrived to make a further petition for the marriage. This time Hsien-tsung at last gave his consent. The situation had indeed changed since 817. The independently minded military governors, who had worried every emperor since Hsüan-tsung, were temporarily quiescent. Moreover, Li Chiang's arguments about the Tibetans made much better sense now, for in 818 they had broken a lull of over a decade and begun making raids against China's borders. It was at about this time, too, that T'u-t'u Ch'eng-ts'ui was murdered and his clique defeated. The eunuch had been a great advocate of the use of military force in settling problems and his fall resulted in a transfer of governmental policy towards a milder approach. I think it likely that Hsien-tsung's unexpected change of heart after seven years of resistance was connected with the palace *coup* (n.268).

The persistent Uighur requests for a marital alliance suggest that '*Pao-i*' wanted good relations with China, an impression strengthened by the fact that the constant fear of the Chinese that he would back up his demands by military force came to nothing. It is true that the Sogdians,

who had formerly exercised an anti-Chinese influence at the Uighur court, were more powerful than ever under the second dynasty, but with the passage of time it had seemed possible to '*Pao-i*' to be on good terms with his south-eastern neighbour without offending the Sogdians. The diplomatic events of the years 813–20 are significant also in showing that it was no longer the Uighurs who called the tune. The power balance had changed strikingly since the days of Mou-yü. Despite their massive military gains in the west under '*Huai-hsin*', the Uighurs were already declining by 813 and the Chinese were able to refuse their demands without suffering humiliating reprisals. Te-tsung, who loathed the Uighurs, had succumbed to pressure for a diplomatic marriage with remarkable speed. Hsien-tsung, who felt, as far as we know, no particular personal feelings of animosity towards them, resisted their diplomatic pressure for seven full years.

As it happened, Hsien-tsung died, possibly through assassination, almost immediately after he agreed to the marriage, and it was left to his successor Mu-tsung to arrange it. He chose as '*Pao-i*'s' bride his younger sister the Princess of Yung-an, who was Hsien-tsung's fifteenth daughter. However, before she had left Ch'ang-an, '*Pao-i*' also died and his successor '*Ch'ung-te*' despatched a welcoming party to receive her. Although '*Ch'ung-te*' was particularly anxious that his bride should be the same princess originally selected for '*Pao-i*', Mu-tsung decided instead to send his father's seventeenth daughter, the Princess of T'ai-ho (n.260).

The policy of friendship towards China and, indeed, the growing luxury at the Uighur court are exemplified in the embassy which arrived in 821 to welcome the princess. It contained about twice as many people and ten times as many horses as that which Tun *mo-ho* had sent, in addition to camels and various items of luxury. The *New T'ang History* comments that 'Never before had a delegation from any of the barbarian states to China been as large as this one'. The emperor allowed only about a quarter of the mission's members to come to the capital. A Chinese embassy was sent to go back with the princess and the Uighur mission to Karabalghasun, and the whole was a train of unprecedented magnificence and size. The Chinese side was apparently also keen to restore friendly diplomatic relations.

In the event, Li Chiang's suggestion that the marriage would inflame Uighur-Tibetan hostility proved justified. No sooner had the Princess of T'ai-ho been ordered to marry the khaghan, than the Uighurs announced that they had sent forces to the far western districts of Pei-t'ing and An-hsi to ward off the attempts the Tibetans were making, or might make, to prevent the Princess of T'ai-ho from reaching Karabalghasun. Although

in the first instance China also suffered renewed Tibetan raids on her borders owing to the marriage, a Sino-Tibetan peace agreement was reached soon after and hostilities were discontinued. From a political point of view, the marital alliance with the Uighurs had definitely worked to China's advantage.

Embassies continued to come from the Uighurs to Ch'ang-an. The sources are too sketchy to provide any definite clue as to the state of Sino-Uighur relations after the Princess of T'ai-ho became the khatun. However, since the Uighur empire was declining rapidly and the final war with the Kirghiz had begun, it would have been very much against Uighur interests to provoke Chinese hostility. Moreover, the Princess of T'ai-ho remained among the Uighurs until after their empire collapsed and doubtless continued to act as a guarantor of Sino-Uighur friendship. Though the years 820–22 saw the height of cordiality between the two countries in the ninth century, it seems apparent that each side retained its attitude towards the other more or less unchanged until the Uighur empire fell in 840.

Commercial Contacts

A prominent feature of the relations between China and the Uighurs was the trade in Chinese silk for Uighur horses. This began after the defeat of the An Lu-shan rebellion on Uighur initiative and as a way of exploiting the Chinese. Every year the Uighurs would bring to China a certain number of horses which they traded at forty pieces of silk each. The Chinese were annoyed both by the high price demanded and by the inferiority of the horses they were compelled to buy. Nevertheless, the Uighurs did not hesitate to ask for higher prices still, and by the beginning of the ninth century were receiving fifty pieces of silk for every horse (n.134).

The trade was undoubtedly a forced one which the Uighurs were able to impose from their position of power. In 773, the emperor tried to make a stand against it and permitted the trade of only 6,000 out of the 10,000 horses that the Uighur leader Ch'ih-hsin had brought to Ch'ang-an. The emperor also tried to shame the Uighurs into discontinuing the forced trade by making them generous gifts. These measures, however, did not produce the desired result of curtailing the trade and the horses continued to arrive every year, placing severe strains upon the Chinese economy.

The silk/horse trade persisted, with only short and intermittent breaks, right down to the end of the Uighur empire and after. The main recourse the Chinese used against it was passive resistance, that is, they made a practice of leaving the onus on the Uighurs to enforce payment for their